

Archaeologies of Gender and Violence

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ARCHAEOLOGIES OF
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EDITED BY UROŠ MATIĆ & BO JENSEN

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edited by
Uroš Matić and Bo Jensen

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Back cover: Roman sarcophagus (detail): The retinue of marine Venus. 220/230 CE. Paris, Louvre Ma 396 (after Rumpf 1939, Pl. 25 no. 72).

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Preface

Uroš Matić and Bo Jensen

This volume grew out of the conference session “Gender and violence in the past: Materialities and corporealities”, chaired by the editors and hosted by the “Archaeology and Gender in Europe” (AGE) working group at the 2013 meeting of the “European Association of Archaeologists” (EAA) in Pilsen, Czech Republic (4–8 September 2013).

Some contributions presented in the original session were already earmarked for publication elsewhere and could not be included here (cf. Matić and Jensen 2013); other colleagues, who had been unable to contribute in Pilsen, offered us contributions to the volume. Thus, the volume developed through several dialogues: between the organizers and the AGE members; between the presenters and delegates at EAA conference session; and between the editors and new contributors to the volume. From the initially planned session, it grew into a volume on archaeologies of gender and violence encompassing some key issues and providing the reader with different approaches to the problem using different case studies.

We would like to thank the AGE, the EAA, and especially the many colleagues who generously helped us with peer-reviews. We would also like to thank everyone who helped in the editing process, especially Simon Dix for improving the English of some chapters. Last but not the least we thank Stephanie Koerner, who provided us with an opening chapter stressing the ethical necessity of dealing with gender and violence, and Louise Hitchcock who provided us with the final chapter of the volume and further encouraged the discussion we started with this volume.

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

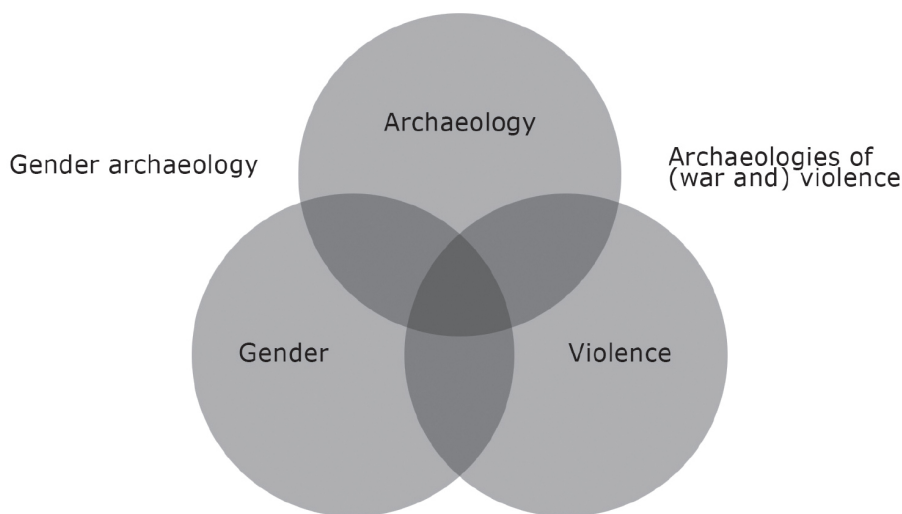
Why do we need archaeologies of gender and violence and why now?

Bo Jensen and Uroš Matic

This book in context

This volume addresses the three-subject intersection of archaeology, gender, and violence ([Fig. 1.1](#)). Each subject has an extensive research literature of its own that cannot be covered in-depth here; each two-subject intersection has generated significant scholarship, but the three-subject intersection remains largely unaddressed in research so far. We suggest that this is a field whose time has come: archaeologists need to consider violence to understand past gender, and we need to consider gender to understand past violence. We must investigate how violence is gendered and how gender influences the frequency and specific forms of violence (Renzetti 2004, 132). Researchers outside archaeology may also benefit from archaeological insights when they try to understand gender and violence, past or present. Notably, a number of reductionist genetic arguments about the adaptive value of aggression appear to ignore the complexity of the human past, or refer to it only rudimentarily. Sociobiologists, too, assume that social behaviour has biological roots and is the product of long periods of evolution, but often fail to test their conclusions on archaeological evidence. As distinct layers of social action are unique to humans as opposed to other animals, sociobiology may well fail to adequately account for human complexity (Malešević 2010, 56). Archaeology may nuance such claims significantly because it covers past societies from the very emergence of our species to our present.

One good starting point for this introduction is the provocative title of Bertelsen, Lillehammer and Næss' groundbreaking volume, *Were they all men?* (1983). Of course, they were not, and on some level even the 1800s pioneers of archaeology recognised this. Yet early works of archaeology were written as if only men mattered. When women were mentioned, they were described only as the writers wanted women to be (Skogstrand 2011). Past women were mostly invisible or silent, and their invisibility and silence was rarely questioned. Then, as now, writers tended to reproduce the triple fallacy that only men ever did anything important or interesting; that modern readers could and should only be interested in such supposedly masculine actions; and that this could be assumed without any supporting evidence or discussion (for critique see Hurcombe, 2007, 102). Early writers on archaeology generally assumed that only men ever fought wars, traded over long distances, colonised new lands, and practiced politics and religion, while women were busy cooking, cleaning and caring for children and the sick; and that war and trade and power are inherently more important and interesting than food and care; and that this is self-evident. These assumptions are based on a historically contingent gendered division of work and tasks, found in so-called "Western" societies. Yet, even among these societies, more diversity exists. Too often, these assumptions were transferred to the past societies with little or no critical reflection, providing various modernist gender mythologies with imagined deep pasts.



Gender studies critiques of violence

Figure 1.1. Mapping of the three-subject intersection with subjects and two-subject literatures. We contest that the dark area of three-subject overlap remains under-explored. (Bo Jensen)

One great achievement of gender studies, in archaeology and elsewhere, has been to challenge such unexamined androcentric beliefs and gender mythologies and to demand arguments and evidence for them. In some cases, evidence exists (e.g. in Viking Age Scandinavia, analyses of sexed inhumation graves show a strong association between biological males and weapon burial, suggesting that fighting was largely a masculine activity – see Gebühr 1994, and Jensen, this volume). In some cases, it does not (e.g. there is no real evidence that Viking Age migration was overwhelmingly male: Stahlberg 2001, McLeod 2011). In all cases, archaeology should rely on evidence, rather than on uncritical projections of the present down on the past. Equally, gender studies have challenged the importance ascribed to supposedly masculine activities: recent papers in gender archaeology have examined, for example, the career of a professional midwife as a central person in a community (Wilkie 2000) and the importance of women's work in inns and the hospitality industry for medieval urbanisation (Hansen 2010). Other work has focused on inns and violence, as in Late Antique Rabbinic literature, where violence is sexualised: a literary stereotype in the Aramaic translations of the Bible likens the mistress of the inn to a prostitute, and casts her as a threat to guests (Grossmark 2006, 60–61). Elsewhere, experimental work suggests that, for example, making sails may have demanded as much skill and labour as did making hulls for Viking Age ships, implying that supposedly female textile workers contributed as much to success as did supposedly male carpenters. Even when we find that archaeology confirms recent gender stereotypes, with women caring, cleaning, cooking and sewing, we need not accept that this work was (or is) unimportant.

In some periods, in some spheres of activity, evidence suggests that “they” were all men, in that men monopolised certain spheres of activity and power. This is true for most European parliaments in the 19th century, for the 17th-century Lutheran church, and for much of political and church history elsewhere. In those cases, we must ask how this monopoly was established and upheld: we cannot assume, as did some contemporaries, that men dominated politics because women were biologically incapable of participating. Rather, such monopolies are created and upheld through carefully constructed and continuously upheld logics of privilege. In early modern Europe, intellectuals wrote endless tracts of theology, political philosophy and early bio-science to naturalise masculine privileges. More than 2,000 years of intellectual effort was invested into shoring up misogyny and maintain a conservative gender hierarchy in the face of profound

economic, political and ideological change (see e.g. Laqueur 1993, 58f, for some starkly misogynist formulations). Thus, we can study gender violence even when it does not stand out as direct brute physical violence, Slavoj Žižek's "subjective violence" (2008). Any oppression (Žižek's "objective violence") based on gender merits our attention (see also below).

They were not all men, but gender studies go beyond merely observing that women exist and may suffer oppression. Specifically, gender studies are founded on the constructivist assumption that gender is a cultural variable and cannot be reduced to biological sex (Díaz-Andreu 2005, 14–15; Gilchrist 1999, 9; Rubin 1997; Sørensen 2000, 18). There has been much debate over how much or how little of the observed variation in health, psychology, lived experience and other areas depends on biology, and how much on culture. Regardless, gender studies must assume, *a priori*, that gender is potentially culturally variant and that different societies, including those that existed in the past, understand gender in different ways. They may differ in how many genders they recognise, and they very clearly differ in their understandings of what legal, ritual and economic rights and obligations a gendered person deserves. Consequently, their understanding of relationships between gender and violence also varies. The big questions in gender archaeology can begin with "Were they all men?", but must proceed further: Since they were *not* all men, how can we learn more about what this meant for their lives? Johansen, Lillehammer and Næss' volume has been hailed as the first anthology on the subject. It was followed by many more texts, most notably perhaps Gero and Conkey's "Engendering archaeology" (Gero and Conkey 1991). For many English speakers, especially, that work was foundational to the archaeology of gender (see also Hitchcock this volume).

Today, the archaeology of gender is well-established. There are recognised senior scholars in the field, several good introductions for students and non-specialists (e.g. Bolger 2012; Gilchrist 1999; Sørensen 2000; Joyce 2008; Díaz-Andreu and Sørensen 1998; Dommasnes *et al.* 2010; Wicker and Arnold 1999), and well-defined standard methodologies for addressing at least some of the well-known, widespread challenges. Gender archaeology has matured significantly since the 1970s, and branched off, generating somewhat separate queer archaeologies and archaeologies of sexualities (for which see e.g. Dowson 2000; Schmidt and Voss 2000; Prentiss 2016). The establishment of gender archaeology as a recognised field has also led to token mentions and token chapters in archaeological works

devoted to other subjects, and often blatantly uninterested in engaging seriously with gender studies. These are, of course, common malaises in any successful sub-field.

The archaeology of violence has followed a somewhat similar trajectory, somewhat delayed compared to gender studies: right from the beginning of serious archaeology, researchers realised that violence had existed in the past, yet they long failed to seriously question why or how. Many writers presented osteological and iconographic evidence for violence in purely anecdotal formats, without any attempt at synthesis or broader analysis. Much pioneering work was done on catalogues of weapons and fortifications, but work was often typological and chronological, with little attention to social meanings or consequences (e.g. the Northern European typology of bronze swords).

In the European academy, violence was long a marginalised subject. However, the wars in former Yugoslavia and the European involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq inspired a new interest in conflict studies, including new, better funded archaeological investigations. The 1990s saw an explosion of new interest in past violence, eventually published in a number of papers and anthologies (e.g. Carman 1997; Carman and Harding 1999; Guillaîne and Zammit 2005; Otto, Thrane and Vandkilde 2006; Ralph 2012; Zimmermann 2009).

As with gender, much early archaeology of violence seems to proceed from the implicit assumption that past violence worked very much like present violence, most infamously perhaps in the case of the invasion-hypothesis: by the early 20th century, archaeologists throughout Europe accepted that changes in material culture, notably in pottery and burial customs, indicated invasions by new “peoples” or “folks” who replaced older populations, possibly through genocide (just as happened in contemporary colonies). As late as 1966, when Grahame Clark famously refuted most of the proposed theories of prehistoric invasions of Britain, he accepted those well-accepted by contemporary historians: the Normans, the Vikings, the Anglo-Saxons, the Romans and the Celts. Since then, the nature, and even the existence, of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic invasions have been much debated and doubted (see Clark 1966; James 1999). Even more recently, Marija Gimbutas proposed that European cultures changed when Old Europe was invaded by Bronze Age warriors from the steppes (Gimbutas 1974). Gimbutas describes a simple dichotomy between, on one side, peaceful, nature-loving, matriarchal Goddess worshipping Neolithic and Copper Age societies; and on the other side

warmongering, patriarchal aggressive brutes with bronze technology. This dichotomy implies a whole chain of signifiers associating femininity with peace and masculinity with war. Later studies have highlighted how strongly Gimbutas' work reflects much more recent war experiences (Chapman 1998).

It is almost a paradox that, at the same time, whole schools of culture-historical archaeologists entirely ignored violence. They described the spread of cultural traits with little attention to human action, almost as if these traits were viruses. Such studies differ superficially from invasion theses, but they too neglected to actually investigate past violence, leaving reader to assume that the past worked just like the present, only with different pots.

In this volume, we challenge this assumption. We suggest violence is culturally meaningful and culturally specific – just as gender is. This claim has long been recognised in anthropology and history where Thomas Hobbes (slightly unfairly) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau have become iconic placeholders for opposed positions within the same approach: Hobbes famously argued that the life of man [sic] in his natural state is nasty, brutish and short and therefore it made sense for men to join together in a commonwealth and agree to mutual armistice, enforced by a sovereign. The “Hobbesian” belief in progress towards less violence can be found in many later works, including Marcel Mauss' famous essay *The Gift* (1967; see Corbey 2006 for discussion). Mauss argued that exchange would allow archaic people to “lay aside the spear” and build peaceful social relations. Thus, Hobbes and Mauss represent the assumption that small-scale and past societies were more violent than later, large-scale civilisations.

Hobbes has been much criticised in later scholarship. He was not a historian, and his vision of the “natural state” probably owes more to the failed state of civil war England than to any report or reconstruction of small-scale societies. Certainly, the war of all against all, imagined by Hobbes, is a fiction: any successful violent action requires organisation and collective coordination, hierarchy and task division (Malešević 2010, 3). Critical archaeologists have attacked this approach for naturalising modern violence. Notably, John Carman points out how reconstructions of the Lower Palaeolithic presents violence as if it was an inevitable part of human experience (Carman 1997, frontispiece), and Adam Stout has investigated links between archaeologies of war and support for the “war against terror” (and, implicitly, the governments Bush and Blair – Stout 2008, 1f).

In contrast to Hobbes' and Mauss' optimistic beliefs in progress and

civilisation, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (and many others) emphasised the negative aspects of modernity. Rousseau famously imagined noble savages living in a bucolic state of nature. He provided no empirical evidence for this and his account may be indebted to contemporary mythologisations of French Polynesia and the South Seas. This “golden legend” ignored the reality of violent and hierarchical societies in that region, as on Hawai’i and among the Maōri (for a discussion, see Besnier 1994, 288ff). Rousseau’s image of the noble savage was reproduced from the early Enlightenment through the Romantic period and dominated most 20th-century social science, though it has been widely discredited in anthropological and archaeological studies (see Malešević 2010, 91–92). Despite such reservations, more recent writers have adopted positions somewhat parallel to Rousseau’s and argued that specific forms of violence, and in particular of war, that are far more typical of large states than of small-scale societies. Polly Wiessner describes how the Mae-Enga in Papua New Guinea historically used exchange to build alliances and mobilised these for violence, and organised formalised violence to allow the groups fighting on the same side to form relationships and engage in exchange (Wiessner 2006, cf. also Fowles 2014). Clearly, this organisation of violence is quite different from the industrialised wars that shaped 20th-century Europe. Elsewhere, R. B. Ferguson has argued that our understanding of small-scale societies is biased by the “tribal frontier”: many ethnographies were collected in the aftermath of conquest, either among the conquered survivors, or in neighbouring borderlands unsettled by migrations of refugees from colonial conquest. The same events that made ethnography possible and urgent also biased the record towards violence, and gave a falsely violent view of small-scale societies (Fergusson 2004, but contrast with Helbling 2006, 114). Similarly, Roderick Campbell and his contributors have argued eloquently and convincingly that some specific forms of violence are fairly characteristic of states and in particular, of state formation processes of conquest and pacification (Campbell 2014; see also Abbrink 2006, 261ff).

Regardless of Hobbes’ optimism and Rousseau’s pessimism, we argue that violence, like gender, is culturally variant and culturally meaningful. Very likely, many past societies were violent, but they were not all violent in the same way, or in the same way as our own societies are. Violence is a contingent, historical phenomenon, which takes different forms and assumes different meanings over time. We submit that archaeologies of war and violence risk reproducing the fallacies sketched above, the assumption that acts of violence are

inherently interesting in and of themselves with no need for social context. We submit that just as early generations of archaeologists reified “prehistoric man” as their privileged subject, so writers on war and violence risk reifying “confrontation” or “battle” as their subject without sufficient attention to the power dynamics or political conflicts behind battles. Gender is one of many perspectives which could help destabilise these privileged research subjects.

Like archaeologies of gender, so archaeologies of violence have matured, established authorities and research programmes and developed canons of core works and key references, and subfields with their own journals, notably the *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* (Taylor & Francis, Glasgow). Yet, so far, the archaeology of violence rarely dealt with gender. In recent edited volumes, *The Archaeology of Violence* (Ralph 2012) includes only one paper that explicitly touches upon this subject, and *Extreme Formen von Gewalt in Bild und Text des Altertums* (Zimmermann 2009) pays little attention to gender in its account of extreme violence.

We cannot do justice to the complexities of studies of gender and violence outside archaeology here. Suffice it to say that they too range from starkly empirical statistics, especially in criminology, over explicitly constructivist analyses of how doing violence is a way of practicing (masculine) gender, to sophisticated debates on personhood and state recognition (see e.g. Butler 2009). We shall present our understanding of how gender relates to violence below. For now, let us simply observe that both feminist critics, gender studies and men’s movements, academic and popular alike, recognise that violence is an urgent problem in modern gender relations. The issue is urgent enough to have its own dedicated, academic journal (*Violence and Gender*, Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.), and receives extensive coverage in the less specialised *Gender and Society* (Sage Publications, New York). The recent *Sage Handbook of Feminist Theory* devotes no less than one fifth of its bulk to violence, and even overviews of feminist literary theory devote articles to war and violence (Evans 2014; Carter 1996; Clarke 1996). Gender studies outside archaeology recognise that violence is a part of gender culture, and that it is as urgent as is, say, sexuality, religion, economy, kinship or health.

Archaeologists have largely failed to acknowledge this. Whereas much has been written on gender and archaeology; violence and archaeology; and gender and violence; little has been written on the archaeology of gender and violence. There are honourable exceptions: Eleanor Scott gave a critique of evolutionist apologies for rape as a rational primate behaviour, and Nancy Wicker has investigated the

role of female infanticide in Scandinavian prehistory (Scott 2001a; Scott 2001b; Wicker 1998). John Robb has analysed osteological trauma patterns in early Iron Age Italy to understand gender division and document emic gender concepts (Robb 1997, 137–138). Sheila Dillon has argued that shifting Roman choices in depicting or omitting war-time violence against foreign women in war, including rape, may reflect shifting needs to maintain civilian Roman trust in the army (Dillon 2006). Barbara Voss has suggested the archaeology of spatial organization in Early Colonial California supports historical accounts of rape of Native American women by Spanish soldiers (Voss 2000, 41). Rebecca C. Redfern argued that in Dorset, southwest England, ante-mortem injuries confirm that women rarely participated or were exposed to violence, but peri-mortem trauma suggests that some women died in conflict, perhaps during the Claudian conquest of Britain in 43 AD (Redfern 2012). Elsewhere, David O'Connor and Uroš Matic have analysed Egyptian monumental art for sexualised metaphors for violence (O'Connor 2005) and relationships between representations of violence against foreign women and children and ideals of the king as protector, destroyer of chaos and peace-maker (Matic 2017, forthcoming).

Unfortunately, such studies are exceptions. Most introductions to gender archaeology leave violence unaddressed (Gilchrist 1999 is an honourable exception), and early and important contributions to the gendered archaeology of warrior masculinity tend to focus on status and identity and ignore the actual violence of war (cf. Treherne 1993; contrast with Härke 1997, which focuses on ethnicity, not gender). Missed opportunities abound, and even studies focused on people other than men in conflict may marginalise gender to focus on ethnicity (Sweeney and Yasur-Landau 1999). Contrarily, most archaeological studies of conflict and violence seem to assume either that “they were all men” or that we cannot know and need make no effort to find out, and that in any case, the connection between gender and violence merits no attention. We beg to differ. The studies listed above illustrate how fertile this field can be. In the next section, we shall explain why the archaeology of gender must address violence, and why the archaeology of violence must address gender.

What does gender have to do with violence?

Let us propose a bare-bones syllogism: gender is a very widespread cultural categorisation system; hierarchy is another very widespread

cultural categorisation; hierarchy is inherently violent; therefore, in hierarchical societies, gender is frequently deeply entangled with violence.

Let us now flesh out this claim: gender is widespread. As far as we have been able to learn, all known human societies have some concept of gender. They may have just two genders or more, and gender only human persons or extend gender to animals, tasks, tool and clothing, moral values and more.

Gender is a cultural, and culturally specific, categorisation system. By definition, “gender” refers to the cultural aspect of systematic difference, distinct from biological “sex” (Rubin 1997). Specifically, we propose that gender is a categorisation system. Categorisation systems allow communities to order the confusing diversity of the world into a few categories and thus simplify complex interactions. Examples include Islamic categories of *halal* and *haram*, Catholic categories of *feast* and *fast*, and modernist categories of *new* and *old*. Each set structures human behaviour, as when Muslims keep *halal* by avoiding *haram*, when Catholics avoid *feast* foods on *fast* days, or when modernists banish the *old* to museums, institutes of archaeology, and rubbish tips, to make room for the *new*. It bears stressing that a single community, and a single person, can subscribe to multiple categorisation systems simultaneously (as in Catholic modernism). Classification systems allow a simple ordering of many complex phenomena into a few, easily understood categories, so as to allow people to structure their own interaction with the world in simple, logical ways. We argue that gender, too, is a classification system: in recent Western history, all sorts of phenomena (colours, expressions, tasks, objects of clothing, foods, drinks, moral values and political concerns) have been more or less firmly coded masculine, feminine or neutral, and people assigned to either gender have been encouraged to avoid phenomena associated with the opposite gender. Gendered behaviours parallel e.g. religious behaviours, including taboo avoidance: North African Muslims may refuse to pick up a knife that has been used to cut pork; Orthodox Jews refuse to use the same pots for meat and milk; dedicated modernists aggressively attacked all “outdated” practices, as in Meiji Japan and in China’s cultural revolution; and insecure western teenage boys may refuse to even touch girls’ clothing. Indeed, religious and gendered cosmologies overlap: some Muslim women do not shake hands with men; some Hungarian women also do not shake hands with men, because female prostitutes would traditionally shake hands with their clients; Salafist men in Egypt avoid physical contact with women other than their

wives. Conversely, people may go out of their way to violate the categorisation systems they reject: Christian communities have a long history of promoting pork to distance themselves from Jews and Muslims, as in 13th-century Iberia and in current Denmark and France; social reformers have aggressively and publicly broken established taboos, as when Christ worked with tax-collectors and prostitutes; and insecure men have cultivated hypermasculine fashions and sports in a rapidly changing world, embracing real (boxing) or symbolic (gangsta rap) violence or old-fashioned hobbies (hunting) in revolt against perceived modern androgyny. All this illustrates that gender is a classification system.

Like other classification systems, gender can be extended to absurd extremes: in British India and in the early 20th-century US, elites symbolically gendered whole ethnic populations, which included both male and female persons. In India, the overwhelmingly male British Raj administration created an artificial hierarchy of assigned masculinity, with themselves on top and with those groups they wanted as allies placed just below and recognised as the most masculine Indians (e.g. Sikhs, Parthans), and all other, less privileged groups symbolically feminised. This stimulated theological debates within Hinduism, with some authorities promoting a more masculine style of worship and devotion, similar to British Anglican “muscular Christianity” (Krisnaswamy 2002). In the US, White elites coded Black populations as threateningly masculine, East Asian populations as infectiously feminine, to the point that Black women were demonised and East Asian men were ridiculed as monstrous paradoxes and threats to proper social order and health (Cheung 2002; Shah 2003). In Nara period Japan, elites wrote in two languages, Chinese and Japanese. International politics privileged Chinese language for matters of state and philosophy, classified as serious, masculine topics, while Japanese was used for local, “frivolous” poetry and fiction, associated with Buddhist monks and women. Thus, written Chinese became a “masculine language” in Japan, and women writers are disproportionally represented in early Japanese-language literature, most famously Murasaki Shikibu (author of *Genji monogatari*, widely claimed to be the world’s first novel). In New Kingdom Egypt, discourses on enemy foreigners feminised the Nubians so far that they are referred to as women in the texts, with Nubian boys depicted in body postures of mourning, usually reserved for women and girls in Egyptian iconography (Matić 2017, forthcoming). Such examples further underline that gender is a cultural classification system, and can be extended, limited or renegotiated with extraordinary flexibility

and disregard for biological sex.

By similar logic, violence can be symbolically sexualised: the red-figure Eurymedon Vase shows a Greek soldier holding his erect penis and approaching a bent-over Persian soldier from behind (see also Hall 1993, 113). Much more recently, American soldiers wrote “up your ass” on missiles launched against Iraq (Butler 2009, 89–90). Very often, wartime sexual violence extends beyond such metaphors to actual physical violation (Misra 2015; see also below).

Gender, then, is a widespread cultural classification system. Another such system is hierarchy. Hierarchies are not quite as widespread as gender, and perhaps not quite as widespread as researchers once thought (cf. Crumley and Levy 1995). Again, early ethnographic reports may suffer from source bias: many early texts were written by Europeans raised in extremely hierarchical and status-conscious home environments, who often used familiar terms to describe new institutions. They recognised kings and slaves, knights and even popes in newly explored lands; later readers have questioned how well these terms really fit local realities. It is possible that early writers also reported hierarchies because hierarchies were what they expected, and that local realities may have been more complex than these observers recognised. Yet, a great many societies world-wide, especially so-called complex societies, do recognise hierarchies. In Late Medieval Europe, for example, the elite organised itself into a bewildering complexity of noble and ecclesiastic ranks, craftsmen ranked themselves in hierarchical guilds and peasants were ranked according to their independence or subservience to manorial lords. Nor are hierarchies limited to such rigidly classed societies: in modern liberal capitalism, almost any object, animal or service can be ranked by price, so that, absurd as it may be, we can compare the price of live goldfish and that of real estate, that of a wedding mass to that of open-heart surgery, that of nurses’ work to that of politicians’.

Hierarchy is inherently violent: it is established, maintained and challenged through actual or potential violence. Hierarchies are established through violence when conquerors, coup-makers or so-called peace-making forces impose a new government on populations, and when militaries capture prisoners of war (or “illegal combatants”) and dictate conditions under which these may be allowed to survive captivity. Hierarchies are maintained through actual and threatened violence everywhere, but most visibly so in regimes of physical punishment: systematic beatings and lashings maintained discipline (i.e. hierarchy) from ancient Rome to the 19th-century British Royal Navy and the 20th century Imperial Japanese Army. Less visibly,

hierarchies are maintained and defended through *legal* force, notably by the police, and through blatantly *illegal* force, notably organised by members of the elite who feel that inferiors trespass on the elite's privileges. Thus, in the 1980s, the British Thatcher government used the police as an armed force to punish striking miners for demanding influence on their own economic future; the South African government used its police to prevent Black workers from striking and even assembling; and both operations were presented as legal by their proponents. At the same time, the British used highly controversial violence to terrorise civilian communities suspected of IRA sympathies (e.g. the Rape of the Falls) and South African security forces used blatantly illegal violence, including torture and murder, to silence vocal opposition activists. A generation earlier, lynch-mobs in the US had used very public and completely illegal violence to punish black people for imagined sexual slights; even today, high-caste Indians, their private militias and the police apparently maim and murder dalit and adivasi people who violate traditional hierarchies (see Scuto 2008, 11 and throughout, Amnesty International 2015). To summarise, we submit that hierarchies always exist through actual or threatened violence, because only violence can convince the oppressed to accept their own oppression. Without violence and the threat of violence, few people would long accept an inferior position in any hierarchy. Therefore, all hierarchies are violent, overtly or implicitly.

In hierarchical societies, gender is deeply entangled with violence. This is perhaps most notable in the violence that meets gender non-conformity: in the US dozens of transpeople are murdered each year, a huge number for a small minority and out of all proportion with murder rates for any other group (see e.g. Michaels 2015). In Brazil and Mexico, with far smaller populations, these murders number in the hundreds (for an overview, see Anonymous 2015, 20). These killings are only the tip of the iceberg: murders are reported, but many victims live quietly with fear, harassment and constant threats of bodily harm. In the Caribbean, recognisably lesbian women are particularly vulnerable to so-called "corrective" rape, while openly gay men are more often threatened with murder (see e.g. Human Rights Watch 2014). Throughout much of the world, girls and women are constantly told to dress "appropriately" and "modestly", to avoid rape (for an extreme example, see Das 2004). Male rape is very rarely discussed in the West, although American popular culture is quietly obsessed with the idea and associates it strongly with people marginalised by the hegemonic social order (for example hillbillies in *Deliverance*, prison populations in *Oz*; for the realities behind the

fiction, see e.g. Donaldson 2004). In all these cases, violence, rape and murder, threatened or actual, are used to enforce gender roles and gender hierarchies. Gender culture is a violent culture, enforced through acts and threats of violence.

Conversely, sexual violence is regularly used to reinforce other hierarchies. During the partition of India and Pakistan, women of all local groups (Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, across languages and ethnicities) were reportedly raped by men of other, hostile groups (Das 2004). Recently, ISIS/Da'esh has reportedly captured, enslaved and sold Yazidi minority girls and women as sex-slaves to its own supporters, reinforcing the hierarchy that ISIS sees between Orthodox Muslims and other populations. In Central Africa, prisoners of the long war in the Congo are reportedly very often traumatised by rape, men and women both. Here, soldiers show, establish and maintain their power over prisoners by raping them (e.g. Storr 2011). Such outbursts of physical violence are only the tip of the iceberg. Below this subjective violence, with clearly identifiable actors, there is a whole level of symbolic and structural violence antedating and foundational to it (Žižek 2008). Gendered violence against women is more obvious than gendered violence against men, but gender is equally central to men's experience of violence (Misra 2015). For example, western boys and men have traditionally been encouraged to toughen up, and to take ownership of violence. Far fewer men than women suffer, or even fear, rape, but far more men than women are injured in brawls. We do not imply that men are as oppressed by current gender stereotypes as are women, but we do stress that gender, like most hierarchies, hurts almost everyone, in different ways. This background is as important as the highly visible tip of the iceberg.

An extreme example of violent gender relations is the problematic idea of *patriarchy*, the idea that societies place (some, often senior) men in hierarchical positions above (all) women. Extreme forms of this idea are found in for example ancient Roman laws that allowed patriarchs to kill their own sons, daughters, slaves and other dependents at whim, and in Old Testament texts that allowed patriarchs to sell their daughters (first) and sons (eventually) as slaves to survive. Early Roman law seems to suggest that women would always be the legal wards men – fathers, husbands, brothers, sons or masters – and that only freeborn, emancipated or orphaned men could act as legally recognised persons (see e.g. Agamben 1998, 87ff). Such extreme examples highlight the inherent violence of gender order, but may not be typical of all unequal, human societies.

Sex sells and violence sells, and popular mythologies eagerly

entangle the two: in Hollywood blockbusters, and in popular media across the West, violent men are common, as heroes and antiheroes. Pacifist heroes are rare. Compare gender-expectations in Karin Kusuma's *Girlfight* (not just "Fight", because this fighter is a "girl", or, really, a young woman) with Gavin O'Connor's *Warrior* (not "Warrior-man" or "Boyfight" or even "Brother-fight", because violence's masculinity goes without saying, even between brothers). Forest Griffin's self-defence manual parody *Got fight?* begins with a test to check if readers are men enough for Griffin's insights, and proceeds through advice on picking up girls and avoiding gay attention on the New York subway; Griffin never discusses if women might want to learn self-defence (Griffin 2009, 1ff; incidentally, Griffin bases his quiz on those in *Cosmopolitan*, hardly very manly reading). Robert Twigger's rather more serious books on, respectively, masculinity and aikido, reveal a parallel slippage, with sections on aikido in the volume on masculinity and vice versa (Twigger 2007a, b).

Clearly, in modern popular culture, the connection between men and violence is somewhat over-determined. Nor is this limited to popular culture: Artemisia Gentileschi left the world a beautiful and brutal image of Judith beheading Holofernes, perfectly capturing Christendom's ongoing ambiguous fascination with the idea of a woman as action-hero (cf. also Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Sophocles' *Medea* and Tarantino's *Kill Bill*). Throughout the long middle ages, Judith was celebrated as one of the woman worthies, a perfect example for Christian and Jewish women. The entanglement of gender with hierarchy and violence is not simply a result of social structures, it is a premise for them: modern western and other cultures maintain and reinforce gender stereotypes through stories of violence, and maintain and reinforce hegemonic understandings of violence through stories about being a man or a woman (see Jensen this volume). In many situations, people adopt cultural understandings of violence in order to perform their gender adequately.

We argue that gender very often limits human choice, and that one obvious reason why people conform to these limits is fear of violent reprisals for deviation. We suggest that gender is essentially a contingent scheme for imposing a largely artificial order on the world, and that one reason why this arbitrary scheme endures is that it is deeply entangled with hierarchy and thus privilege, so elites mobilise violence to maintain it. We argue that systems of gender do not persist because they are objectively convincing, nor because they provide tangible benefits for everyone. On the contrary, they persist because powerful groups enforce them out of self-interest. In everyday life,

genders persist despite being illogical and hurtful, because and only because of the perceived risk of violence to anyone who violates the rules. Elites uphold gender, violently, because it is deeply entangled with their privilege, so that challenges to gender are challenges to privilege; non-elites accept and internalise gender because they understand and fear the risks of deviating: ostracism, rape, mutilation and death.

We stress that gender is both a performance in the everyday world and cosmological way of thinking and organising big ideas. To elaborate, let us also draw on Phillip Bourgeois' theory of the continuum of violence. Bourgeois (2004, 426) suggests that four types of violence form a continuum (namely state violence, violence of everyday life, structural and symbolic violence). Our main interest here is not Bourgeois' typology, which resembles many other typologies of violence, but his theory of the continuum: Bourgeois argues that societies where any one type of violence is common will likely also see much violence of other types. He does not fully explain the mechanics of this relationship, but offers a few examples: for much of the late 20th century, El Salvador was torn by civil war (state violence); after the war, El Salvador had some of the highest rates of violent crime anywhere in the world (violence of everyday life). From anecdotal evidence, it seems that some of this criminal violence was performed by demobbed soldiers, desensitised to violence by their war experiences (Pedelty 2004). Meanwhile, South Africa suffered under apartheid, one of the world's most famous systems of symbolic and structural violence. This system was upheld by everyday violence, in the form of official police operations to disrupt strikes against the system, and by systematic, clandestine operations by the secret police, who murdered, tortured and kidnapped critics and opponents of the regime (see Krog 2004). Post-apartheid South Africa inherited large populations of desperately poor black people who had no traditional trust in state authorities and who had, again, become desensitised to violence through years of exposure. It also inherited police officers who had previously participated in the apartheid regime's legal state violence against these groups. Unsurprisingly, then, South Africa, and especially its shantytowns and squatters' camps, remains among the most violent places in the world outside actual war-zones (see Scheper-Hughes 2004).

Thus, whether doctrines of symbolic violence lead to segregation and structural violence and then to crime and war, or whether war encourages people to demonise ideological opponents of the regime as enemies of all that is good, or both, violence tends to overflow from

one category to another (Žižek 2008). In that sense, any and all doctrines of hierarchical distinction are potentially violent, and all systems of distinction are open to hierarchisation and militarisation. Gender is not inherently violent, but it is inherently symbolic and can easily become entangled with hierarchy, symbolic violence and overt violence.

As we shall present in detail below, the contributions in this volume devote more or less attention to physical evidence for the violence of everyday life and for structural violence, more or less to ideologies of symbolic violence behind them. However, we also raise this issue to address one popular but rather selective understanding of gender in archaeology: informal conversations show that many archaeologists, especially those outside the field, assume that gender studies is a kind of hippiearchaeology, a self-confirming belief in the perfect, peaceful past, peopled by women who made cosmology, not war, and men who stayed discretely out of the limelight (cf. Marija Gimbutas' Old Europe, above). This stereotype parallels stereotypes of queer archaeologies as reduced to searches for (accepted, even celebrated) sex between men in the past. This is not a good description, either of what gender archaeology or of what it should be. Gender archaeology is about understanding the role of gender in the human past from material remains, no more and no less. The unpleasant side, including the violence of gendered life, is as important as the pleasant side. Nor is cosmology an innocent alternative to violence. Claims to knowledge and claims about correct order are claims to power. Systematisations of difference into neat categories is a power move, and Scheper-Hughes and Bourgeois' chilling description of the logic of genocide is eminently cosmological: "There is the belief that everyone will benefit from this social cleansing, even the dead themselves" (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgeois 2004, 14). As Isaac Winkel Holm (2010, 17) shows, popular culture cosmologies of disaster and descend into barbarity contributed significantly to the violence with which the Bush administration mishandled the aftermath of Hurricane Katarina: here, troops and commanders accepted unsubstantiated rumours of rape, looting and cannibalism as factual, simply because their cosmology associated these tropes with the wake of disaster; they expected civilisation to collapse and went to New Orleans as if onto the set of *The Walking Dead*. Cosmology is deeply entangled with material realities of power and violence (cf. Matić this volume).

Today, many different archaeologists are studying different aspects of gender in different societies and periods. We cannot expect that

they all share any one focus, and we do not suggest that all gender archaeology should focus exclusively on violence. However, we submit that if, collectively, all gender archaeologists fail to discuss violence, then we will confirm the stereotype of gender archaeology as wistful thinking. If we want gender archaeology to realise its full potential then we must confront the possibility that some past societies may have had gender order that were very oppressive, or very exotic, or both, or neither.

The chapters in this volume

Our contributors have accepted our invitation to address gender and violence and have done so in quite diverse ways. Of course, the ideas expressed by this introduction are not necessarily shared in their entirety by the contributors to the volume. We believe this diversity makes the volume even richer in perspectives and this is what the intersection of archaeology, gender and violence really needs.

We are fortunate to have an opening discussion from Stephanie Koerner, who lifts the volume above the necessary myopia of individual case-studies and raises important issues on the ethics of living with gender and violence. Koerner's discussion is theoretically erudite and ethically urgent and may illustrate, better than this introduction, why we need to address gender and violence. She deals with the myth of matriarchy, contingency and with how these relate to overall theoretical and epistemic developments throughout the academy.

André Spatzier presents an exiting newly-discovered Neolithic site from Germany, and argues that burials here reflect a stark divide between burials of honoured young males who died during warrior initiation and sacrifices of women. The chapter reflects an impressive combination of sound empirical work, both in excavation and in post-excavation osteoarchaeology and daring theoretical analysis. Spatzier's analysis also suggests a stark and urgent link between physical violence and social structures, notably gender. Moreover, human sacrifice is one of those issues where archaeology can add much to modern debates, a type of violence almost unknown today, and perhaps most often been associated with emerging states (see e.g. Campbell 2014). Theoretically, Spatzier draws on the structural anthropology of Victor Turner, whose overriding claim was that ritual allowed societies to maintain stability and control change. Turner's work has been very popular, and sometimes badly misunderstood, in archaeology. Too often, perhaps, archaeologists have simply projected

the theory down on the past. Spatzier offers an excellent example of how we can integrate ambitious theory with solid empirical work and how evidence of subjective violence can be used to discuss objective violence (*sensu* Žižek 2008).

Lisbeth Skogstrand examines the cultural construction of that other gender, masculinity, in the contexts of Bronze Age Denmark and Roman Iron Age Norway. She compares graves from two regions of Norway and convincingly argues that although men in both regions were portrayed as warriors, each region had its own social understanding of what warrior identity meant. Here, we have truly proceeded far beyond observing that gender existed in the past, and well into understanding how it was constructed and what this meant for actual people. Also, Skogstrand focuses on the construction of masculine identities, something of a blind spot in many feminist and gender studies analyses. Since the 1990, we have seen very good sociological studies of masculinity, but the archaeology of masculinity is still very much an emerging field (*cf.* Knapp 1998). Skogstrand's chapter is a paragon of how we should address this.

Uroš Matić analyses Egyptian images of queen Nefertiti subjugating enemies, but equally importantly, he analyses how these images have been interpreted and misinterpreted by early modern scholars and writers to construct a bizarre Orientalist fantasy of the woman despot. Matić convincingly argues that the images in question are much less radical than imagined and fit solidly within established conventions of Egyptian art. They do show Nefertiti as an active ruler, reflecting Amarna period understandings of the equal importance of pharaoh and queen, and they do raise intriguing moral questions about the human cost of elite gender equality, and of class inequality. This reflective chapter mobilises post-colonial and post-modern critiques and situates archaeological research in the present. Matić manages the difficult balancing act of elucidating both on the actual past and on how and why more recent researchers have written about it. He also begins the important task of revisionist reflection in gender archaeology.

Ian Armit offers a thought-provoking supplement to his groundbreaking work on headhunting in Iron Age Europe: his chapter focuses on the statues from Entremont, in France, capital of the Saluvii confederacy. Entremont has produced some of the most famous statues in Iron Age Europe, portraying elite men as warriors with cut-off heads, probably head hunters' trophies. Armit now introduces the far less well-known women's figurines from the site and argue that they, too, can be related to a complex ideology that linked violence

and death to regeneration and fertility through the ritual of head-hunting. Armit's analysis of gender, with its focus on fertility, points back to ethnographical work much older than modern gender theory and may illustrate that these concerns are not just short-lived academic fashions. Similarly, his archaeology builds on generations of accumulated research into history and society in Late Iron Age Gaul.

Christine Hue-Arcé presents a masterful analysis of an overlooked body of sources: After Alexander the Great's conquest, Ptolemaic Egypt was a country administered in two languages, Greek and Demotic. Here, for the first time, we are introduced to the Demotic text sources for violence, notably those associated with court trials, and Hue-Arcé reads these closely and with a fine understanding of gender. It is fascinating to see her chapter as midway between the bone evidence of individual acts discussed by Spatzier and Farnum and the very public constructions of ideology and ideal discussed by Armit, Matic, Moraw, and Dezhamkhooy and Papoli Yazdi. The court documents truly illustrate how a society negotiates the social meaning of specific acts in all their historical contingency. They are also cautionary reminders that all sources represent claims, made by some agents and contested by others.

Susanne Moraw analyses Late Antique Roman images of nubile girls as victims of violence, interpreted through a feminist critique of the pornographic gaze. Moraw's analysis paints a fascinating picture of how gender and social status were negotiated notably through artistic representations of violence. The chapter begs questions about the physical realities of girls' lives in the period, questions that must of course be addressed through different sources and future research. In terms of theory, this chapter is an outstanding example of a particular tradition of left feminist critique. Gender archaeology has perhaps too often overlooked the importance of Marxist feminism, both as an origin for theories that have spread throughout gender studies and as a critical position. The theory Moraw works from has its critics, but her chapter is an excellent illustration of how much more we can do with the evidence, if we are willing to engage seriously with theory. This chapter is also impressive for its overview of sources across pagan and Christian traditions.

Miryam Dezhamkhooy and Leila Papoli Yazdi introduce us to Persian Sassanid official art and literature. Little known in Europe, the material is both startling and chilling: the Sassanid state embraced religious Zoroastrianism and created an uncompromising ideology centred on reproductive sexuality, the king's perfect, masculine body

and on perfect, masculine privilege. Much will echo with readings in Medieval Christianity, but the iron voice of authority documented in the Persian record is truly startling. Here, more than in any other chapter, we see the state claiming and celebrating its own violent authority. These authors draw heavily on Michel Foucault, one of the finest writers on bodies in the power of the state. Their willingness to engage with this theory should help readers engage with this otherwise unfamiliar material. Like Armit's chapter, this text shows us the centrality of hegemonic states and state ideologies in some constructions of gender. Like Moraw's, the chapter addresses the powerful empires of antiquity and raises questions about how their hegemonic power manifested locally. Thus, Dezhmakhov and Papoli Yazdi's contribution is welcomed, not only for its specific information about Persia but equally for qualifying facile conceptions of European uniqueness.

Bo Jensen combines iconographic and written sources to investigate feuding in Viking Age Scandinavia. He argues that image and text alike portrays successful revenge as a masculine monopoly, and that the violent women portrayed in mythology were not role-models for real women, in the way that legendary violent men were for real men. Jensen suggests that surviving stone monuments tie in with local and contingent practices of oral folklore and feuding, performances that were much more local and negotiated, much less canonical, than those hegemonic ideologies discussed by Armit, Matic and Dezhmakhov and Papoli Yazdi.

Laura M. Whitehouse returns to a well-known problem, the ambiguous and controversial archaeology of possible warrior-women in Anglo-Saxon England. Whitehouse contributes to a long-standing discussion in Early Medieval archaeology about how or if graves reflect living society. Gender archaeology has long struggled with the problem of relating and distinguishing anatomical sex from assigned gender in graves, not least because we may doubt that past populations assigned gender using quite the same norms as did pioneers of archaeology. Whitehouse's empirical study throws new light on a much-debated issue that has suffered from too much speculation and too few facts. Her definition of the osteoarchaeological "warrior template" will no doubt inspire future work. Like Skogstrand, she presents an overall regional survey, compiling the results of decades of archaeological activity to form a coherent overview. These kinds of studies are slow and laborious, much less popular with the press than are new discoveries of beautiful treasures or bizarre, unique finds, yet much more likely to contribute something of lasting value to

our field.

The present volume may be somewhat Eurocentric, but we are fortunate to benefit from new research from South America: Julie Farnum offers a thoughtful and very empirical analysis of physical anthropology in Moche and Sipán Peru. Much of her evidence come from contexts interpreted as human sacrifices. The chapter is based on an impressive catalogue of detailed osteoarchaeological analyses, and collects information otherwise scattered far and wide. The chapter is particularly interesting for the way in which it integrates osteoarchaeology and iconography to address both the physical realities and the cultural meanings of gendered violence in Ancient Peru. More than any other contributor to this volume, Farnum engages with the idea of structural violence (see above) and show us how archaeologists can address this issue. She raises interesting questions of how far Sipán women had legal agency of their own.

Finally, we are pleased to have the final chapter written by Louise Hitchcock who is one of the pioneers in discussion on the problem with binary sex/gender system as a universal model for ancient and modern societies. She frames the volume and its contributions to the topic of gender and violence in the current approaches to gender in archaeology and critically examines the results and conclusions of the volume's contributions. Hitchcock even offers other possibilities and further challenges both herself and the authors and readers.

As readers may note, this book is not an attempt to write the grand narrative of gender and violence throughout the past. On the contrary, it is intended as a call for discussion, presenting many different archaeologies, some of them perhaps incompatible, and many different types of evidence. Unfortunately, we have been unable to include any chapters on the origins of war, on battleships, on fortifications and landscapes and cityscapes of conflict, on weapons and armour, on treatments of gender and violence in museum exhibitions on archaeology. These are urgent issues but they remain to be explored.

Conclusion

Violence is a physical phenomenon, evident to archaeologists in bone trauma, and a socially meaningful fact, evident in iconography and text sources. Actuality and ideal cannot be separated, but form a dialectical whole. Violence is always visited on specific bodies and is therefore always already gendered. Just as the social meanings of violence and those of gender vary from society to society, from

context to context, so do the meanings of violence. We cannot hope to understand the local, social meanings of violence without gender, nor should we try. The two, like most meaningful categories and bodily practices, are endlessly intertwining.

We believe that the archaeology of gender and violence is a subject whose time has come. This may be the first anthology on subject, but it will not be the last. So many more cases need to be analysed, so many cases deserve a different approach, a different theoretical perspective. This is only the beginning.

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Chapter 2

Revisiting the myth of matriarchy, rethinking determinism, seeing anew

Stephanie Koerner

Introduction

This chapter responds to the editors' request of an exploration of areas of overlap between something of the range of questions that concern the present volume. Insights drawn from Joan Bamberger's essay on "The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society" (1974) provide points of departure for exploring the following questions: What have been the circumstances under which highly problematic deterministic generalisations about gender roles and violence have gone unquestioned? How are cultural constructions of gender and violence linked? How useful are micro-historical approaches for addressing these questions; and developing alternatives to deterministic generalisations about gender and violence?

"Twentieth century social and cultural anthropology has promised it's still largely Western readership enlightenment on two fronts. The one has been the salvaging of distinct forms of life from a process of apparent global Westernisation.... The other... has been to serve as a form of cultural critique for ourselves... [that] makes us re-examine our taken for granted assumptions" (Marcus and Fischer 1986, 1).

It is difficult to overstate the contributions that feminist and engendered scholarship has made to awareness of how closely the values of these tasks relate to one another. One of the present

volume's key aims is to question the long history of presuppositions about gender and violence being supposedly universal facts, which are determined by necessity (see Jensen and Matić's introduction to this volume). It bears stressing the extent to which such presuppositions are rooted in images of human origins, which portray ancient hominids at crossroads of vexed options, for instance, of either risking becoming extinct under the pressures of environmental change and/or competition with predators; or adopting the predispositions and skills needed for culture. Key motifs include tools and weapons; the supposed exchange (by men) of marriage partners; symbolic thought and a sense of the sacred; and aggressive competition over resource control. Stephanie Moser (1996, 189) notes that powerful visual portraits of the supposed "predatory origins of humanity" are not restricted to popular culture. In archaeology pictures intended to reconstruct hypothesized hominid behaviour and its environments, "are not only a powerful form for reinforcing arguments," they are "tantamount to reasoning in the in the discipline" (*Ibid*).

Problematic assumptions about humans' predatory nature are not restricted to accounts of ancient hominids. They have long played central roles: in debates over warfare and gender in societies caricatured as "fierce people" (Chagnon 1997); in interpretations of cultural evolution as a process whereby "*Man* became more adept at manipulating his environment" (Millage Nelson 1997, 68); and in the ways in which generalisations about human origins are paired with problematic models of how "humans became scientists" (Ingold 1996, 74). These difficulties raise a wide variety of questions:

- How can we account for the widespread acceptance of these images despite lack of supporting evidence?
- To what extent might the history of these images also be the history of the exclusion of women from narratives that portray that past as though it had been "peopled only by men" (see Jensen and Matić's introduction; Sørensen 2000) and from key areas of research and teaching?
- What obstacles do these images pose for appreciating that "optionality, variability and unpredictability" can "produce positive qualities of social being rather than negative ... empty randomness" (Rosaldo 1999, 112)?

Bamberger's essay, "The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society" (1974) is published in a collection of studies that marked a turning point in feminist and engendered scholarship innovation. *Women, Culture and Society* (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974;

see also Reiter 1975) brought unprecedented light to the bearing that anthropology and archaeology's cross-cultural perspectives have upon issues raised by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1989 [1952]). Key problems that concern the collection include:

- the invisibility of women in mainstream theory;
- the ubiquity of men in positions of authority in academic institutions and society, in general;
- the question of whether it is possible to find a case documenting the absence of gender hierarchy and/or of male dominance over "public spheres".

Bamberger's essay has special advantages for our purposes. It illuminates connections between these problems; and shows that there is nothing at all "mere" about gender and violence as symbolic forms (see also, in this volume, Matic; Moraw; Whitehouse). Key topics in Bamberger include:

- lack of evidence that might support influential scholars' theories about matriarchy in so-called "primitive societies";
- striking parallels between key motifs in scholars' theories and those at the heart of myths and rituals, which define and legitimise domination by men and subordination of women in what have been seen as the most "egalitarian" indigenous South American cultures;
- the complexity of roles secrecy plays in rituals centring on myths about the "Rule of Women" in primordial times and the violent origins of male dominance.

Bamberger's essay has two main parts. The first concerns historical parallels. Bamberger examines influential matriarchy centred models of the origins and evolution of human societies, including those of Johann Jakob Bachofen (1885), Lewis Henry Morgan (1877), Edward Burnett Tylor (1871) and Friedrich Engels (1884). These models differ in numerous details. But they share key features with one another; as well as with myths at the heart of the male initiation rituals in of a number of indigenous South American cultures anthropologists have studied. This raises the questions: Why have these theoretical models been so influential, even though they completely lack supporting evidence? And, why do these models share so many features with the myths that structure male initiation rituals? The second part of her essay concerns constellations of myths about the "Rule of Women" in

very geographically distant and culturally different indigenous South American cultures, which have been studied in Tierra del Fuego; central Brazil (where Bamberger did her fieldwork) and northwest Amazonia. Despite numerous contextual differences, the myths about the origins of male initiation centre on common motifs:

- the “Tyranny of Women” in “a prior and chaotic era before the present social order”;
- the end of the “Rule of Women” brought about by “a great massacre, from which not one woman escaped” that forced reproduction to wait until young girls matured;
- the origins of the secrecy surrounding male rituals; of the division of male and female spaces and activities; and of the strange beings who initiate men and threaten women and children with violence, even death, if they trespass secret initiated male domains (Bamberger 1974, 276–280).

Bamberger stresses the high levels of secrecy that surround:

- ritual practices and objects centring on the above listed motifs;
- “male domination” and “female subordination”;
- myths about dreadful things that happen if women discover hiding places, see male rituals or even look at such sanctified male objects as magical musical instruments.

She notes that, while it is “not clear from the published reports whether the women actually believe the tales told to them[,] the penalties brought to bear on women and children for infractions of the ceremonial injunctions seem real enough” (Bamberger 1974, 275). It is difficult to overstate the complexity of the issues raised. In Bamberger, rule through the terror of a secret has a huge geographical distribution-extending through the vast forests of northern Amazonia to South America’s southernmost tip amongst tribes of Tierra del Fuego studied by Martin Gusinde (1982 [1923]).

What are the contents and contexts (and sources of power) of a secret that elicits so much terror and motivates threats of violent responses to injunctions? What contributions might secrecy’s cultural construction make to the efficacy of symbolic forms that link gender and violence? (Several chapters in the present volume concern similar questions.) In a book that bears upon these questions – *Defacement. Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative* (1996) – Michael Taussig revisits George Simmel (1906), and argues that what are at issue are paradoxes of “public secrets” – secrets that everyone recognises as not

being secrets at all on many levels of personal and public life. Power becomes anchored to people's fears of what will happen if infractions occur, or if they openly deny that they believe in the powers that must be kept secret. How might these fears compare with those examined in Mary Douglas' (1966) work on "purity and danger" (or "pollution")? For Douglas, cosmological beliefs about what is pure and what is dirty (or dangerous) and about how infractions defile are cross-culturally extremely ubiquitous. Douglas stresses that comparable beliefs are as ubiquitous in contemporary western cultures as they are amongst the diversity of ethnographically, historically and archaeologically documented cultures.

It is difficult to overstate how relevant these insights are for cultural constructions of violence and "sex-gender systems" (Rubin 1975). They compare closely with Gail Rubin's (1984) arguments concerning obstacles, which impede comparative studies of the cultural construction of sexuality and the erotic, namely, problems of sex essentialism, sex negativity, the sex hierarchy and lascivious treatment of sexuality (cf. Schmidt and Voss 2000). Moreover, Douglas' insights might be equally relevant for investigating the complex values that motivate much polemic over vexed options of "pure versus applied research" and "objectivism versus hyper-relativism" (e.g. Wylie 1996). In their introduction to *Archaeologies of Sexuality* (2000), Barbara Voss and Robert Schmidt stress the relevance of Rubin's insights for addressing obstacles to cross-culturally viable approaches to the diversity of forms sexuality has taken. They propose several measures to counteract these, including:

- "social constructionist" perspectives;
- self reflexive awareness of biases that eclipse positive qualities of variability;
- contextual approaches to variability (cf. Voss and Schmidt 2000, 5-7).

The questions that concern this chapter compare with these measures. Thus, the chapter can be characterised as exploration of challenges such measures face in contexts of research on the dynamics of gender and violence; and of the importance of strongly interdisciplinary approaches to addressing these challenges.

Historical challenges and prospects

Today it may be difficult to appreciate the novelty of Bamberger's (1974) approach to studying the complex range of factors responsible

for the disregard of very influential theories' lack of supporting evidence. Many aspects of Bamberger's approach are now widely accepted—at least in contexts where social constructionism is conventional. For example, the introduction that Robert Preucel and Ian Hodder wrote for the section of chapters on "Gender in Archaeology" in *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory* (1996, 415) stresses that one is not gendered at birth: "As Foucault's *History of Sexuality* shows, 'sex' is not given, but produced in historical contexts," and "the 'biological' is one of many components of the cultural construction of sexuality and social relations." But significant challenges persist. This chapter's first section concerns challenges relating to the question: What have been the circumstances under which problematic deterministic generalisations about gender and violence in human societies gone unquestioned?

Emphasis falls upon problems of: vexed options of "objectivism versus relativism" (Wylie 1996), traditions that equate knowledge with paradigms for epistemology (Rouse 2002), and notions that see contingency as threatening problem (Prigogine 1997; Rosaldo 1989).

Vexed options of "objectivism versus relativism"

"The Interplay of Evidential Constraints and Political Interests: Recent Archaeological Research on Gender" is the title of the chapter Alison Wylie contributed to *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: A Reader* (Preucel and Hodder 1996). For Wylie (1996, 436), it is not possible to address the question of "Why is the Archaeology of Gender Emerging Only Now" without taking diverse internal (particular to archaeology) and external factors (including "feminist commitments") into consideration. However, this perspective faces being "identified" and "dismissed" as "extreme anti-objectivist" (*ibid*). Are we forced to pursue "some new Archimedean point" – "some stable rock" against the supposed threats of "madness and chaos where nothing is fixed" or "hyper-relativism" (Wylie 1996, 438–439)? On the one hand, objectivism demands excluding "all external, potentially biasing (idiosyncratic or contextually specific) factors" (Wylie 1996, 437). On the other hand, hyper-relativism is not an option that feminist and engendered scholarship can afford. Moreover, it is unlikely that most influential versions (still largely male) of this option see feminist, indigenous non-Western and "halfie" (Abu-Lughod 1991) perspectives as compatible with their own.

Lila Abu-Lughod examines this issue in an essay ("Writing against Culture" 1991) that begins by noting that two critical groups are excluded from the very influential collection of studies, *Writing Culture*

(Clifford and Marcus 1986). The volume is said to have introduced a new form of critiquing anthropological knowledge. However, it excludes feminists and “halfies – people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education or parentage deeply challenges the most basic amongst these premises” (Abu-Lughod 1991, 467). Although James Clifford’s introduction apologies about the feminist absence, “no one mentions halfies or the indigenous anthropologist with whom they often work very closely” (*ibid*).

What is eclipsed is the insight that that the problems that face female, indigenous and halfie anthropologists have direct bearing upon problems with anthropology’s assumptions about self and other. In addition, *Writing Culture* (1986) shares attitudes towards biases and partiality with the very paradigms it opposes. The most widespread objections to feminist and semi-native (and indigenous) perspectives focus on supposed biases and partiality. Prominent objections centre on observers’ supposed bias; and partial (incomplete) pictures:

“Halfies are more associated with the first problem, feminists the second ... These worries suggest that the anthropologist is still defined as a being that must stand apart from the Other, even when he or she explicitly seeks to bridge the gap” (Abu-Lughod 1991, 468).

Feminism and alternatives to knowledge = epistemology equations

Joseph Rouse’s exploration of “Feminist Challenges to the Reification of Knowledge” relates directly to these difficulties. It provides important insight of areas of overlap and of divergence between feminist and mainstream social constructionist approaches to science and philosophy. Both agree that important aspects of science are contingent and alterable (even though traditional epistemologies present them as natural and immutable); and that recognising contingency makes a political difference (Longino 1980). It bears stressing the long history of feminist contributions to these ideas. A notable example is Donna Haraway’s (1978) analysis of the roles played by highly problematic images of sex and dominance in mainstream theories about human origins and history. Haraway (1978, 21) focuses particular attention on historicising the roots of these theories in the emergence of images of the body politic that “linked natural and political economy on multiple levels” during the early period of the Industrial Revolution.

It also bears stressing the extent to which feminist and engendered

scholarship has diverged over the last decades away from presuppositions about knowledge, which traditional epistemology and mainstream social constructionist (and hyperrelativist) paradigms share. These paradigms mirror one another around notions that see knowledge as epistemology, which are rooted in the very ancient dichotomy of supposedly timeless truth versus contingency (seen as the supposed effects of biases, partiality of perspective, illusion and/or falsehood). The importance of feminist and engendered scholarship's divergence away from these notions is difficult to overstate. As Michael William's (1991, 22) points out, paradigms that equate knowledge with epistemology hinge upon "four central ideas: an *assessment* of the *totality* of our knowledge of the world; issuing in a judgement delivered from a *detached* standpoint, and amounting to a verdict on our claim to have knowledge of an *objective* world."

Rouse (2002, 144–146) explores several related problems in influential publications by (male) exponents of social constructionism. These include deep discrepancies between arguments concerning political significance, and commitments to a supposedly detached standpoint. The warnings these publications voice against "going native" in studying scientific cultures closely resemble traditional epistemology's warnings about dangers of biases and partiality. Rouse (*ibid*) stresses several points relating to Wylie and Abu-Lughod's arguments, including that "going native" is seldom an option for women in still largely male dominated scientific institutions. In addition, for women and many culturally marginalised people, the very idea of detachment risks re-enacting the history of their exclusion—that is, the history of notions that only western men belong at the core. All this relates to such novel distinguishing features of feminist approaches as their: opposition to relativism; normative stance toward how scientific claims are formulated, supported and accepted; and willingness to retain and employ suitably revised conceptions of evidence, objectivity and distinctions between knowledge and beliefs.

These features are evident in Wylie's arguments against vexed options of "objectivism and relativism" (1996). They are likewise evident in Abu-Lughod's approach to biographies of everyday life. Her "Writing against Culture" (1991) balances critical and positive objectives. Her critical aims include examining two key reasons to be wary of generalisation. One is that, "as part of a professional discourse of objectivity, it is a language of power relations" that is often presented as standing apart from and outside of what is being

described – the “very gap between authoritative discourses” and every day life results in “the construction of anthropological objects as different and inferior” (Abu-Lughod 1996, 478). Second, generalisation often risks marginalising or eclipsing variability. Both of these problems relate to those at the heart of equations of knowledge = epistemology discussed above. For Abu-Lughod (1991, 479), “one powerful tool for unsettling the culture concept and subverting the process of ‘othering’ it entails is to write ethnographies of the particular” which focus on individuals’ biographies, with attention to people’s changing relationships to one another and their historical circumstances.

These aspects of Wylie and Abu-Lughod evidence numerous further areas where feminist and engendered scholarship diverge from traditions that equate knowledge with epistemology, which are important reasons why the former:

- does not see historical contingency as intrinsically a problem or threat, but rather as a fundamental aspect of the world and reason why things can be otherwise (e.g. Rosaldo 1989; Stengers 1997);
- focuses attention on how diverse realms of knowledge are negotiated in contexts (e.g. in this volume, Armit; Hue-Arcé; Matić; Moraw; Skogstrand; Whitehouse);
- has long recognised the interdependence of systems of knowledge and non-knowledge that is now much discussed (e.g. Beck 1992; Dilley and Kirch 2010).

Rethinking notions that see contingency as a problem

All this opens space for shifting attention away from polemic over paradigms rooted in problematic responses to 20th-century crises over representation, which perpetuate the difficulties we have been considering. However, the potential of this space continues to be marginalised by new versions of attempts to settle irreducibly complex epistemic, political and ethical conflict around what Stephen Toulmin (1990) called the “Myth of the Clean Slate”. In consequence, the “dilemma of determinism” or “Epicurean Dilemma” (Prigogine 1997) continues to arise in new guises. Thus the question: What light might fresh perspectives on these problems throw on questions about the circumstances under which problematic deterministic generalisations about gender roles and violence have gone unremarked?

One of Ilya Prigogine’s aims with *The End of Certainty. Time, Chaos and the New Laws of Nature* (1997) is to challenge notions that see

contingency as a problem. He revisits debates that emerged around Democritus' (460–370 BC) claims about the world's reducibility to the determined movement of atoms and void. At the heart of these ideas (and vexed options of order versus chaos) is what has been called the Epicurean Dilemma. For Epicurus (341–270 BC) – as for Lucretius (99–55 BC) – Democritus' claims mean that we have no alternatives to choose from except for the vexed options of either a deterministic order in which human meanings and values are of no significance, or chaos governed by change and the random whims of the gods. The solution that Lucretius attributed to Epicurus hinges upon the idea of *clinamen* – the idea that contingency is an intrinsic property of the world – things have been and can be otherwise (Bloom 1973). Thus, particular events that take place in microscopic processes can lead to conjunctures on the very scales on which macroscopic changes occur. In Prigogine – as in Lucretius (and, perhaps, in many feminist and engendered perspectives) – micro-histories of human agency can make a difference on the very scales on which major (equally contingent) historical transformations occur.

This raises questions about the circumstances under which the dichotomy of truth versus contingency and the Epicurean Dilemma arise. Prigogine found steps towards answers to his questions about notions that see contingency as a problem (even as a sources of pollution) in Stephen Toulmin's approach to rethinking standard accounts of science and modernity in *Cosmopolis. The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (1990). There are many parallels between Toulmin's (1990) approach to the "Myth of the Clean Slate" and Bamberger's (1974) approach to the "Myth of Matriarchy". For Toulmin, the more we examine discrepancies between predominant images of modernity, the more puzzled we become about the circumstances under which these go unremarked. Similarly, Bamberger stresses that the more we become aware of discrepancies between the roles of "matriarchy" in the history of humanities theory and lack of supporting evidence, the more we are pressed to rethink the "Myth of Matriarchy".

One of Toulmin's hypotheses (which Prigogine found especially illuminating) is that, although there is much contextual diversity amongst relevant circumstances, they exhibit analogous patterns. He focuses particular attention on patterns that arise around claims that the state of emergency of contemporary affairs makes it necessary to demolish everything that went before and quest of timeless certainty from a "clean slate" (or *tabula rasa*, as Plato and Locke put it). For Toulmin, as for Prigogine, there is, of course, no *tabula rasa*. A critical challenge is that of developing the interdisciplinary approaches

needed to historicise “The Myth of the Clean Slate” and the “Epicurean Dilemma”. The next sections concern means to address this challenge.

Interdisciplinary challenges and prospects

The introduction of the concept of “structural violence” opened new possibilities for seeing gender and violence as historically contingent and deeply cultural constructed (see in the present volume, Dezamkhooy and Papoli-Yazdi; Farnum). It also opened space for rethinking determinism, and developing contextualised (tractable) means to address structural violence (e.g. Abu-Lughod 2002). In “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” (1969), Johan Galtung introduced the concept to describe violence that: prevents and/or removes people’s conditions of possibility to meet basic needs; is socially and culturally institutionalised; is, thus, an “avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs”. In an equally important essay, “Cultural Violence”, Galtung develops a framework for analysing distinctions and relationships between “direct, structural and cultural violence” (Galtung 1990, 291): “By ‘cultural violence’ we mean those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence ... that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence”. The terms “framework” and “approach” bear stressing. In Galtung, concrete relationships between different forms of violence are historically contingent rather than determined by some external timeless necessity (consider, for instance, warfare and state violence, racial and/or ethnic violence, gender violence, domestic violence).

There is nothing at all “mere” about the roles of cultural violence in the dynamics of direct and structural violence (as numerous chapters in the present volume show). James Gilligan (1997, 196) argues that culture is crucial for understanding the “non-natural ... excess deaths and disability suffered by victims of structural violence caused by socio-cultural discrimination and denigration”. There are important discussions of obstacles structural violence poses for “freeing humanity from poverty and hunger” (UN Convention on Sustainability (Rio de Janeiro, 2012, <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/html>). According to Catherine Lutz and Donald Nomini (1999, 73) the growing eminence of structural violence calls for treating “economies of violence” as a key focus of *Anthropological Theory Today* (1999, 73): “anthropology has generally skirted around the important question of what violence and the forms of political economy have to do with one another”, and “prevented

any significant attention being given to” its relevance for rethinking what is meant by “the end of the Cold War”. The authors of *Globalisation, the State and Violence* (Friedman 2003) voice comparable critiques; and argue for strongly contextual and comparative study of the dynamics of “technological and scientific innovations in the sphere of armaments” and structural violence (Wievioka 2003, 107).

Comparable concerns are voiced in Giorgio Agamben’s (1998, 2005) publications on the historical contingency of “sacrifice” and “victimization”; paradoxes of how lawless violence has been seemingly legalised through cultural constructions of “state of exception”; and implications for change in what is meant by “the contemporary”. Structural violence was a key focus of the 2016 meeting of the Royal Anthropological Association on *Anthropology, Weather and Climate Change*. Numerous panels concerned connections between ecological problems and other cultural constructions of inequality; and structural violence. Notable strands of discussion concerned the great extent to which women bear the heaviest burdens of the implications of climate change and ecological problems for structural violence. Instead of seeking supposedly altogether context independent timeless solutions, we need to try to: disentangle the range of challenges that are at stake; identify promising pathways; and consider possibilities that things can be otherwise.

Many of Lila Abu-Lughod publications stress the difficulty and pressing importance of such efforts. Her article “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” (2002) show how directly issues raised by the quote from Marcus and Fisher (1986) above relate to themes of gender and structural violence. The article’s central question is: “Can anthropology – the discipline devoted to understanding and dealing with cultural difference – throw light on characterising military-political intervention in Muslim countries as liberating or saving women?” For Abu-Lughod, key challenges include:

- obstacles posed by generalisations about religion and gender;
- the need to examine the long terms history of roles that “discourses on equity, freedoms and rights” of women have played in colonial practices;
- lack of “serious appreciation of differences amongst women of the world – as products of different histories, expressions of different circumstances, and manifestations of desires” (Abu-Lughod 2002: 783).

Abu-Lughod (2002, 789) believes that “rather than try to save others (with the superiority this implies and the violence it would entail)” we

might better think in terms of “working with them in situations we recognise as always subject to historical transformation; considering our own larger responsibilities to address the forms of global injustice that are powerful shapers of the worlds in which they find themselves.” All this calls attention to the urgency of the highly interdisciplinary question: How are cultural constructions of gender and violence linked?

It bears stressing how closely this question relates to debates over problematic generalisations about human agency (Koerner 2004). A much-debated question is: “if [human] agency is important for understanding particular human activities, must it be included in explanations of long-term socio-cultural change?” (Dobres and Robb 2000, 11–12). It is difficult to overstate feminist and gender scholars’ contributions to fresh approaches to this question. In their introduction to “Gender in Archaeology” in *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory* (1996, 415), Robert Preucel and Ian Hodder stress areas of feminist and gender scholarship that relate directly to agency, including:

- cross disciplinary insights of “multiple genders”;
- the anthropology of self, the body, and representation;
- political and equity issues at stake with gender based marginalising (and/or excluding) others from research contents (aims, objectives, methodology and theory) and social contexts of research and teaching institutions (Preucel and Hodder 1996, 415–430).

Discussions of the above noted question posed by Marsha-Ann Dobres and John Robb in *Agency in Archaeology* (2000) have called attention to the need of: alternatives to images of a supposedly timeless placeless rational individual self, prior to embodied, social and material preconditions (Foucault 1965, 1984, 1990; Butler 1993); fresh perspectives on discrepant experiences (Gero 1991); and alternatives to models of knowledge that equate knowledge with epistemology.

These challenges relate to one another. Traditional portraits of a supposedly disembodied rational individual are based on particular cultural ideals (male and modern western). The “individual” is portrayed paradoxically both an historical prime mover, and as an a-historical node through which the other presumed prime movers operate (nature–culture, material conditions–ideas, and so on). For some, we ought to abandon individual human agency altogether. However, this would (amongst many other things) make it impossible

to account for discrepant experiences; to explore these experiences' historical significance; and even to understand how humans interact (Koerner 2004). These issues' significance is brought into relief by Eleanor Cassella's approach in *The Archaeology of Confinement* (2007) to the dynamics of:

- dominance, resistance, conflict, accommodation, struggle and co-operation in prisons;
- ethnicity, class, age, gender, and structural violence as materially embedded and embodied concrete symbolic forms;
- the "enduring spirit of survival" of inmates (Cassella 2007, 143).

Agency is a recurrent theme throughout the present volume in chapters that stress the historical contingency of the dynamics of cosmological images and embodied and materially embedded practices (see, in this volume, Armit; Hue-Arcé, Jensen; Moraw; Skogstrand; Spatzier *et al.*; Whitehead). There is (of course) no such thing as a timeless placeless self isolated from its embodied, material and socio-cultural conditions. But we need some conceptions of human selves and patterns of intentionality in order to address questions about cultural constructions, in general, and to explore their historical contingent diversity, in particular. Symbolic forms are not powerful in isolation. Judith Butler's (1993) concept of "gender performativity" has been useful for addressing obstacles posed by "essentialist accounts of agency and subjectivity" (Moore 1999). Henrietta Moore (1999) notes that the concept has advantages and difficulties.

"Gender performativity is about acts of doing, many of which may not be linguistic; but proponents of the theory sometimes forget that an individual's relation to gender ... and the body is through the symbolic ... To parody Marx, we may construct ourselves but not under conditions of our own making. What we do not control is our relation to the symbolic" (Moore 1999, 165).

So how do symbols work? How do such concrete symbolic forms as sex-gender systems (Rubin 1975), cosmologies of "purity and danger" (Douglas 1966), and the notion of a "homo sacer" (Agamben 1998) work at the levels of individuals, communities and cultural histories as "subjective phenomena" (Bloch 1985)? These are questions raised by Galtung's (1990, 291) reference to "internalization" as a "psychological mechanism" of central importance for understanding

“cultural violence”. However, his approach to this “mechanism” may leave the sorts of gaps between psychological and cultural models, which we examine below unaddressed. Addressing such gaps may be a critical step towards addressing problems of deterministic portraits of violence and gender, and of human beings and society as being in dire need of a powerful external source of hierarchical social order.

Rethinking violence and the sacred

Several chapters in this volume stress rethinking problematic generalisations about sacrifice (and other forms of ritual violence) in lights of gender (e.g. Armit; Moraw; Spazier *et al.*). There is a huge – and in many respects extremely sophisticated literature – on ritual sacrifice (or the dynamics of violence and the sacred), which leaves issues of gender – together with a number of other critical issues – unaddressed. Rene Girard’s *Violence and the Sacred* (1972) is an excellent example. Girard focuses particular attention on the paradox that sacrifice can appear, in some contexts, as a fundamental sacred obligation to be neglected at grave peril and, in others, as an altogether immoral and/or criminal activity with equally grave consequences. For Girard, Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss’ book on *Sacrifice* (1968 [1899]) raised – but did not resolve – a critical question, namely, that of how one becomes a victim. Girard sets aside questions about whether the victim is innocent or guilty. For Girard (1972, 4), sacrifice is about “society seeking to deflect upon a relatively indifferent victim, a ‘sacrificeable’ victim, the violence that would otherwise be vented on its own members, the people it desires to protect.”

It bears noting the etymological roots that the term “sacred” shares with term, sacrifice. In ancient Latin texts on religion and culture, *sacer* refers to something set apart from everyday society as blessed and/or cursed. *Homo sacer* could refer paradoxically to a person who embodies the sacred, and/or who is excluded from social community and what it holds sacred. The term has had a powerful legal connotation, namely that the *homo sacer* can be killed without the act being treated as a murder. The philosopher, Giorgio Agamben has examined the history of connotations of this idea *Homo Sacer* (1998), and its implications for deep structures of some of the most problematic legal-political, epistemic and moral currents of our times (*State of Exception*, 2005). His work throws light on the antiquity and tenacity of images of violence and the sacred. These images figured centrally in traditions of myth documented by the works of Homer and Hesiod (c. 750–650 BC). Paulo Rossi’s *The Dark Abyss of Time*

(1994) shows how central these images were in early modern debates over “the history of the Earth and the history of Nations”. In the early 19th century, C. J. Thomsen used ancient Greek and Latin sources to work out a Three Age System for classifying artefacts as belonging to prehistoric Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages (Clarke 1968; Trigger 1989). Thomsen’s approach hinged upon two propositions: that “closed finds” and “find situations” are crucial for determining the period and functions of artefacts, and that the materials used to make weapons and ritual objects can be used to determine the periods artefacts belong to (Thomsen 1836, 27–90). Then, as now, archaeologists focus on “votive deposits” as indices of the dynamics of ritual, warfare and social hierarchy and (Kristiansen 1984). This raises questions about parallels between the significance of weapons and warfare in prehistoric myths, rituals and iconography, and in today’s theories about the ancient world (see in this volume, Whitehouse).

Few anthropologists have devoted more sustained attention to the implications of “violence and the sacred” for ideologies of dominance and subordination than Maurice Godelier (see also, in this volume, Jensen and Matić; Armit; Farnum; Dezamkhooy and Papayazdi; Moraw). In *The Mental and the Material* (1986, 156), Godelier puts forward a remarkable hypothesis grounded in the argument that “the power to dominate is composed of two indissolubly linked elements: violence and consent”. He stresses that these elements are not independent of one another, and that violence is always a crucial aspect of domination – even if threatens at a distance. In Godelier’s hypothesis, the most effective ideologies are those that represent dominance and subordination as an exchange in services. In these ideologies, while the services rendered by the dominated are represented as less valuable because they concern the “material conditions needed for the society’s reproduction”, the services of the dominant are portrayed as “concerning the invisible forces” reproducing the universe – “[d]ebt is the formula for the bonds of dependence and exploitation which link the dominated to the dominant” (Godelier 1986, 160–161).

Godelier’s hypothesis provides a useful point of departure for developing more satisfactory approaches to questions about the roles of powerful symbolic forms in the dynamics of domination and subordination, and gender and violence. One reason is the range of important questions it raises, but leaves unaddressed, for instance, about: the things (and, especially, the engendered people) involved in the exchanges (cf. Rubin 1975; Schmidt and Voss 2000; Voss and Casella 2011; Weiner 1996); problems of treating violence as an a

priori fact along lines that parallel Durkheim's vision of ritual and social control (Durkheim 1964 [1893]; Turner 1974); and gaps between psychological and cultural models, which impede research on how symbolic forms work (Bloch 1981, 1985). A detailed analysis of these issues lies beyond this chapter's scope. Instead we focus on the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to addressing gaps between psychological and cultural models.

Symbolic forms as intrinsically interdisciplinary entities

The work of few anthropologists provides more useful points of departure than Maurice Bloch's. In "The Past and the Present in the Present" (1977, 281), Bloch focuses on obstacles posed for studying change by models that see "society" as a "homogeneous, organized and self-reproducing entity"; and equate cognition (especially of so-called pre-modern "modes of thought") with myth and ritual. In "From Cognition to Ideology" (1985), Bloch develops a framework for addressing gaps between psychological theories of cognition and anthropological theories of culture, which focuses on the following questions.

"First, what kind of processes can lead to the formation of an ideology as a subjective phenomena? Secondly, we must ask how does that process interact with the process of learning from interaction with the environment? ... Thirdly, from where does ideology gain its power? Finally, we must ask how is ideology formed historically" (Bloch 1985, 34).

For Bloch, gaps between anthropological and psychological theories impede addressing even the first two questions. Anthropology's models of collective representations pose for obstacles for understanding culture and cognition in that they disregard distinctions between ritual and non-ritual communication. Psychological theories are useful for appreciating the importance to learning of interaction with the environment. But they ignore cultural interpretations of the environment; focus on individuals in isolation; and disregard historical issues of ideology and power relationships (Bloch 1985, 30). Bloch's approach takes its departure from Turner's (1969) famous model of:

"ritual process as proceeding through three stages – from structure, to anti-structure and structure again. The first stage involves an emphasis on social order as it is presumed to exist before the ritual. This ordering ... is then overturned by the middle or liminal anti-structure which Turner characterises as

rule free, chaotic and anarchic. This stage is then replaced by a new structure” (Bloch 1985, 37).

Bloch stresses both the path breaking significance of this model, and problems with its presuppositions about functions that ritual serve as a mechanism for preventing or ameliorating conflict. Put along lines used in the present essay before: To what extent does this model portray human beings as having no choices other than following the rules of a deterministic social order or risking violent chaos? Bloch’s analysis of a strongly gendered ritual in Madagascar Merina culture throws fresh light on this question:

“In the first stage of Merina circumcision ceremony the world is presented as a place where women and only women are responsible for the control of the production and nurturing of children ... In fact the picture built up in the first state is so constructed the better to knock it down ... The second part ... goes much further than simple negation – it is not an assault in the state of affairs represented in the first stage, it is an assault on its very basis: non-ideological cognition itself ... [Indeed it] seems to be an assault on such fundamental cognitive categories [as] those of person and time [and] space ... The order of the third stage is built up on the smouldering ashes of the second, and ... vague and hazy ... The third stage is the image of ideology. This is not recognition of a similar structure to that of stage one ... but a product of a totally different type ... [It] is an alternative view of the cosmos ... It has to be so in order not to come into conflict with everyday life cognition where ... it is still women who bear children and undertake most of the upbringing” (Bloch 1985, 40).

Bloch’s account compares with Bamberger’s (1974) concerning male initiation rituals in interesting ways. The “vague and hazy” image of ideology in Merina ritual compares with the secrecy surrounding the “Myth of Matriarchy”. Bloch’s analysis also throws light on questions about how ritual shapes subjective experiences of ideology’s power (cf. Galtung’s 1990 reference to “internalisation”). These issues relate to Bamberger’s discussion of the implications for “male dominance” and “female subordination” of exposure to ritual processes. There is nothing “mere” about these processes:

“Initiations are recognisable educational institutions for those undergoing them. The transmission of cultural values to boys in the form of esoteric lore, to girls in terms of lifelong

prohibitions and restrictions on their behaviour constitutes a major focus of adolescent initiation” (Bamberger 1974, 278).

Secrecy and the magnification of ideological interpretations of reality

This raises a question at the heart of *Women, Culture and Society* (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974), which arises throughout the present volume: Can and have things been otherwise? Bloch (1977, 189) has long been concerned with the contingency of correlations between the amounts of cosmological and ritual elaboration (of “the past in the present”) and institutionalized hierarchy – but not necessarily “degree of inequality”. Deep inequality, relations of domination and subordination grounded in violence and oppression – notable those involving “structural violence” (Galtung 1969, 1990; Lutz and Nomini 1999) – are highly unstable. For Bloch, they only seem stable when ritual and ideology eclipse instability. Put another way, instability has been eclipsed into “systems of non-knowledge” (e.g. Dilley and Kirch 2010). Critical roles may be played by ideological images of realms of time and persons divorced from everyday experience, and “of inequality as an inevitable part of an ordered system” (Bloch 1977, 189).

How might we be able to understand these “vague and hazy” images’ efficacy? Bamberger’s references to the significance of ritual secrecy (and what these suggest about the dynamics of systems of knowledge and non-knowledge) may provide useful steps towards addressing this question. According to Taussig (1999, 171–177) the notion of a “public secret” helps throw light on paradoxical situations where there is at some level of shared understandings no secret, but people believe nevertheless. For Taussig, the question of whether or not male initiates or women and children believe the secrets of ritual knowledge can mislead. More useful questions are: Why do many people say that they do not fully understand the cosmological secrets (they belong to realms of specialists, ancestors, and so on), but nevertheless believe deeply in their injunctions? Why do the men involved in the rituals and ritually excluded women seem to believe devoutly that great dangers will come to those who transgress ritual regulations on practice, and even to those who break rules about what they are ritually not allowed to know? These questions call for balancing the huge attention, which has focused on the significance of “the mask” (and ritual masking) (e.g. Lévi-Strauss 1982 [1979]), with fresh approaches to such issues as the following: How important might ritual unmasking be to the efficacy of masks? And to secrecy as a

powerful symbolic form? How might answers to these questions relate to questions about the dynamics of cultural constructions of gender and violence, and systems of knowledge and non-knowledge?

A detailed treatment of these questions lies far beyond this chapter's scope (and quite a number of chapters in this volume examine materials bearing upon them). Instead, two examples of the sorts of contexts that may be relevant are mentioned. One is that studied by Fredrick Barth (1973) in which ritual masking and unmasking play central roles in perpetuating the aura of secrecy surrounding gender and violence as symbolic forms at the heart of male initiation rituals of the New Guinea, *Baktaman*. A second example is the context described in Martin Gusinde's (1982 [1932]) ethnographic study of Selk'nam society of Tierra del Fuego. (It bears noting that Gusinde's study is one of Bamberger's key sources.) Taussig (1999, 127) notes that, in Gusinde's account, "the apocalyptic moment of the unmasking the spirit was accompanied by telling the initiate the story of how the present world and social order came into being through the massacre of the women and the appropriation of their secrets. Then the initiate is sworn to secrecy on threat of death by the now unmasked person who he recognizes as a close relative."

What light might such examples throw on roles masking and unmasking can play in processes that transform gender and violence into symbolic forms, and subjective experiences of ideology – with powerful implications for systems of knowledge and non-knowledge? On the one hand, much of the social significance of rituals in which taboo and/or secrecy play key roles hinges upon actors' shared understanding of and participation in secrecy practices. On the other hand, secrecy restricts. Valuing something as secret truths hinges upon exclusion (rendering invisible). Thus, the paradox that "if the value of information is greater, the fewer persons have it; its value is greatest when it stops being information at all" (Barth 1973, 217). If only one person has the information, and does not transmit it, it disappears.

Towards seeing anew

"History become effective to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being – as it divides our emotions, dramatises our instincts, multiplies our body and sets itself against itself" (Foucault 1977, 153–154).

Few innovations have played more central roles in challenging vexed options of "objectivism and relativism" (Wylie 1996) than micro-

historical approaches to rethinking deterministic models of knowledge and history. Although there is huge diversity amongst these approaches, they share a refusal to treat contingency as a problem and emphasis on contingency's positive implications. In line with Jensen and Matic's introduction to the volume, this chapter has drawn upon the work of many authors who share these orientations. For Rosaldo (1989, 112), for instance, "[i]ndeterminacy allows the emergence of culturally valued relationships where one can follow impulses, change directions and co-ordinate with other people.... These qualities constitute social grace, which in turn enables an attentive person to be effective in the interpersonal politics of everyday life". This brings us to our final question: How important are micro-historical approaches for challenging deterministic generalisations about gender roles and violence?

The present volume is filled with important archaeological responses to this question. To conclude we focus on a study, which relates the passage from Foucault above to the relevance of micro-historical approaches to gender and violence as symbolic forms, and the dynamics of systems of knowledge and non-knowledge, namely, Londa Scheibinger's "Lost Knowledge, Bodies of Ignorance, and the Poverty of Taxonomy" (1998). Of special importance is how her study shows that the dynamics of "direct, structural and cultural violence" (Galtung 1990) are not determined by necessity – things can be otherwise.

Scheibinger's study is a biography – in the sense Abu-Lughod (1991) describes – of a female natural philosopher and medical practitioner, Maria Sibylla Merian, who pursued a career that was extremely unusual in her times. It is study of the history of the plant, which Merian identified as *flos pavonis* in her book on plants; their practical uses; and their social and medical importance: *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium* (1705). Scheibinger's is also a micro-history of knowledge about this plant; and of how knowledge about its medical potential as contraceptive became lost. It concerns broad changes during the late 17th and 18th centuries in the dynamics of science and society. This period has long been portrayed with sweeping images of the scientific revolution and global expansion. Scheibinger's study (1998, 135) goes against the grain of a "long standing narrative" that has portrayed the history of botany as a supposed "liberation from the practical, usually medical, focus of pre-modern botany". It concerns the complexity of processes that are conventionally eclipsed by such dichotomies as those of pure versus applied science, and truth versus contingency.

“Lost knowledge” is a micro-history of the marginalisation of women’s roles in everyday medical practice, especially in the context of childbearing and rearing; and of “pregnant women losing their prerogative to judge for themselves” (Scheibinger 1998, 140). It is a biography of a woman working in the midst of complex gendered power relations created by slavery. In these contexts, contraception and abortion were key issues for plantation owners. They blamed these for having to purchase new slaves because of very low births, ignoring the extent to which sterility was caused by “hard labour and poor living conditions” together with the numerous other social and psychological factors that diminished “desire to have children” (Scheibinger 1998, 138).

“Merian was indeed bold to travel to Surinam ... Moral and bodily imperatives kept the vast majority of Europe’s women close to home; the German anthropologist, Johann Blumenbach, was typical in warning that white women taken to very warm climates ‘succumbed to copious menstruation, which almost always ends, in a short space of time, in fatal haemorrhages.’ ... There was also the often expressed fear that women giving birth in the tropics would deliver children resembling the native peoples of those areas” (Scheibinger 1998, 126).

Merian was likewise bold as a scientist. She was a rarity as a woman travelling on her own to contribute to scientific knowledge; and in terms of the beliefs she developed about how knowledge can and should be used through her relationships with indigenous people-and, especially with female slaves. In her account of the plant, *flos pavonis*, Merian wrote:

“The Indians who are not treated well by their Dutch masters, use the seeds to abort their children, so that their children will not become slaves like they are ... In fact, they sometimes take their own lives because they are treated so badly, and because they believe they will be born again, free and living in their own land. They have told me this themselves” (Merian 1705, quoted in Scheibinger 1998, 125).

Scheibinger’s is also a study of the loss of knowledge under conditions of change in the dynamics of authoritative knowledge and non-knowledge.

“The curious history of the *flos pavonis* shows how voyagers selectively culled from the bounty of nature knowledge

responding to national and global practices, patterns of patronage and trade, developing disciplinary hierarchies, personal interests, and professional imperatives. In the process much useful knowledge was lost; many bodies remained ignorant, and still other bodies, ignored” (Scheibinger 1998, 141).

For Scheibinger, as for many other feminist and gender scholars contributing to remarkable innovations in contextual and comparative micro-history (and to change in meant by a context or a culturally specific situation), individual human agency matters. It is not trivial that Merian was a woman. This is one of the insights at the heart of Abu-Lughod’s (1991) “ethnographies of the particular”; similarly, Simone de Beauvoir’s groundbreaking *The Second Sex* (1989 [1949]) – a book long recognised as having introduced the sex–gender distinction – stressed that one is not born, one becomes a woman. It is also an insight at the heart of Isabelle Stenger’s account of the biologist, Barbara McClintock in *Power and Innovation* (1997). Stengers (1997, 125) stresses that McClintock “did not practice a women’s science, she was a woman doing science.”

“She had learned the art of solitude, the affirmation of singularity, the acceptance of marginality that literally makes so many scientists mad ... Perhaps this is the real lesson of her life for those who are interested in relationships between women and scientific activity – not the discovery of an ‘other’ reason, but the exploration of what reason is capable of when it is liberated from the disciplinary models that normalize it; the exploration of the real reasons one can have, even if one has a liking for it, for not feeling ‘at ease’” (McClintock 1997, 129).

Note that emphasis falls both on what “reason is capable of” when it is liberated from the Epicurean Dilemma; and on “that we may construct ourselves but not under conditions of our own making” (Moore 1999, 165). It may be a reason capable of appreciating the positive qualities of contingency-of recognising that things can be otherwise.

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Chapter 3

The honoured and the sacrificed? Gender and violence at a sanctuary of the late 3rd millennium BC in Central Germany

André Spatzier

*with anthropological analyses by Marcus Stecher and
Kurt W. Alt*

Introductory remarks

Except for a few simple post constructions interpreted as “temples” or “houses for the dead”, sacral buildings or sacral structures, i.e. architectural sanctuaries, are largely unknown throughout the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC in central Europe. Applying a polythetic approach, the circular enclosure of Pömmelte-Zackmünde can be interpreted as a metaphor reflecting the complex cosmology of the Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age people in Central Germany (Spatzier 2017, 259–268). This interpretation model is the result of investigations funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). They were realised in the context of the Research Group FOR550 “Der Aufbruch zu neuen Horizonten – Die Funde von Nebra, Sachsen-Anhalt, und ihre Bedeutung für die Bronzezeit Europas” (Departing for New Horizons. Finds from Nebra and Saxony-Anhalt and their Importance for the European Bronze Age) and as cooperation between the Institute for History of Arts and Archaeology of the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg and the State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt. The results of the investigations of the

site Pömmelte-Zackmünde are published as a monograph (Spatzier 2017).

One of the many intriguing aspects of the monumental enclosure is evidence for the perception and the treatment of members of different social groups that is deducible from a diverse set of human skeletal remains found at the site. Summarising the description, archaeological analysis and interpretation of the material evidence (Spatzier 2017, 213–234; Spatzier *et al.* 2014) and concentrating on two contrasting groups – flat grave inhumations and deviant burials in shaft-like pits – this chapter examines how gender and violence were linked in funerary and ritual practices at the enclosure of Pömmelte-Zackmünde.

For a better understanding, “standard burials” of the Bell Beaker culture and Únětice culture in central Germany shall be summarised. In both cultural contexts, the dead were buried in rather small grave groups or cemeteries and typically in flexed posture align along the north–south axis facing eastwards. While in the Bell Beaker culture women were laid down on their right side and men on the left side (Bruchhaus and Neubert 1999, 133–139; Fischer 1956, 161–169; Hille 2012, 69–74), the people of the Únětice culture buried both sexes on the right side (Bruchhaus and Neubert 1999, 139–144; Fischer 1956, 170–185; Hubensack 2013). Burials of infant and juvenile individuals too reflect the culturally specific alignment. Exceptions like graves with disarranged or intentionally piled up bones are known from the Early Bronze Age. Recent investigations indicate a higher frequency of burials in settlement pits in the younger Únětice culture while flat grave burials decrease. This hints at a change in long established and very uniform funerary practices (Hubensack 2013, 144).

The Pömmelte enclosure

The circular enclosure of Pömmelte-Zackmünde is located in the flood plain of the river Elbe, about 25 km southeast of Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany, and near the confluence of the river Saale. It has been discovered by aerial prospection in the early 1990s (Schwarz 2003, 105–108) and was completely excavated in several field campaigns from 2005 to 2008 (Spatzier 2012b). Regarding the architectural design and the dating, the enclosure resembles the ‘classical’ henge monuments of the British Isles (cf. Harding 2003, 12–34) and displays remarkable affinities to complex henges like Woodhenge or the Southern Circle in Durrington Walls, which emerged in the mid-3rd millennium BC (Gibson 2005, 59–80, 75–77;

Wainwright 1989, 49–114). However, the Pömmelte enclosure also has to be understood as part of a phenomenon of roundels in central Europe and beyond first known from the Linear Pottery and the Lengyel horizon in the first half of the 5th millennium BC (e.g. Bertemes and Meller 2012) and reappearing in diverse cultural contexts at various times between the late 5th/early 4th millennium BC to the mid-1st millennium BC (Spatzier 2012a; Spatzier 2017, 273–296).

The Pömmelte enclosure has a complex architectural design and consisted of several concentric rings (Fig. 3.1). The largest circle is 115 m wide and was made from posts standing close to one another. Next came a ring of elongated pits, which once probably formed several sections of a segmented ditch, and a circular ditch. A palisade made from densely arranged posts accompanied it. As the backfill layers of the ditch suggest, a bank ran along the outside of the ditch, maybe just piled up in separate segments. Finally, in the enclosure's central area lay two rings of loosely set posts. The two main entrances allowing access through all ring zones along their alignment were oriented towards the east–southeast and opposite, architectonically less emphasised, towards the west–northwest.

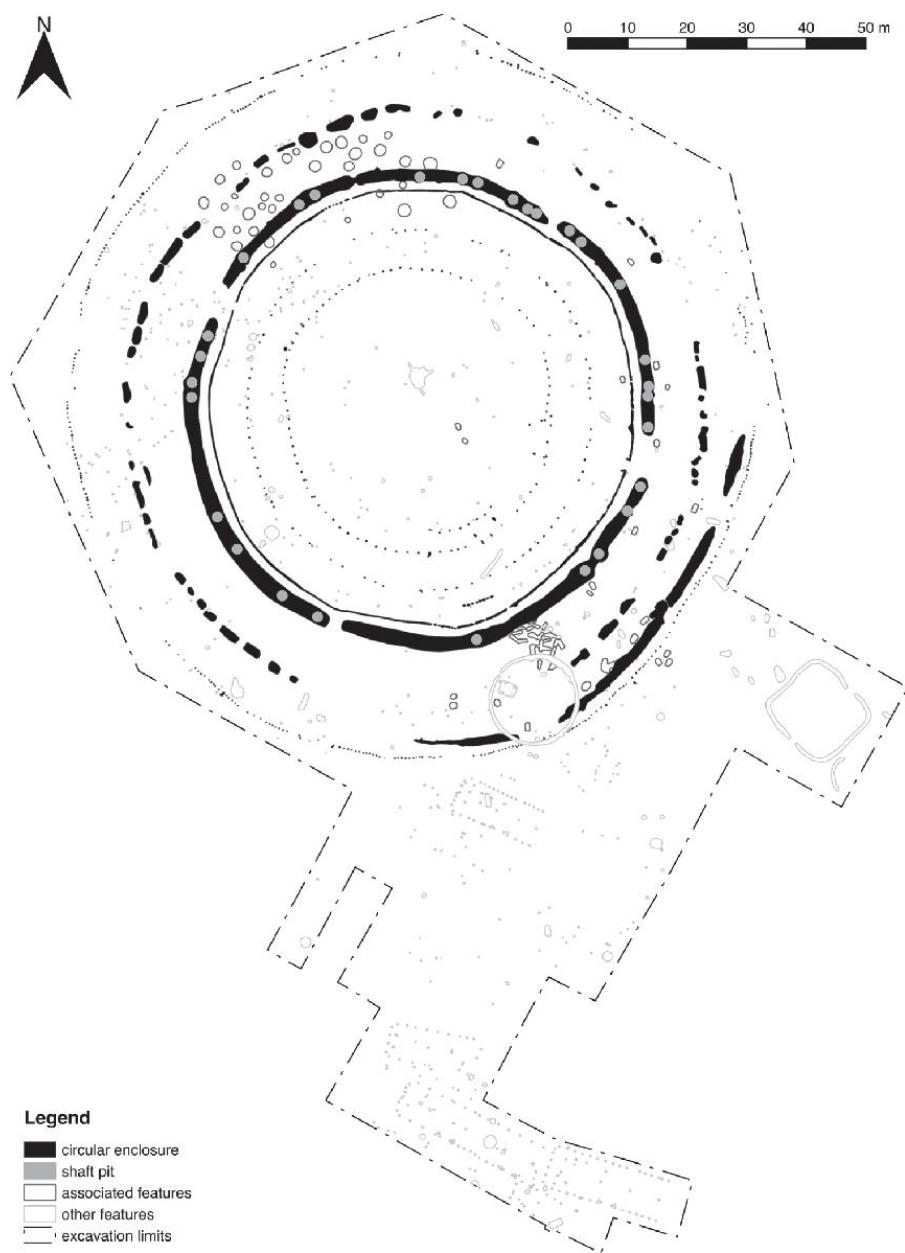


Figure 3.1. Plan of the 2005–2008 excavations at Pömmelte-Zackmünde, Saxony-Anhalt.

According to the finds, stratigraphic information and radiocarbon data, Bell Beaker people built and initially used the Pömmelte enclosure. Throughout the main occupation phases it served as a sacral place suited for large gatherings and social activities like performances including rituals, ceremonies, and feasting. The material culture represents the late Bell Beaker culture and the earliest phase of

the Únětice culture (Proto-Únětice phase). A Bayesian model of a series of radiocarbon dates, based on stratigraphic evidence and processed using OxCal 4.2.4 (Bronk and Ramsey 2009) with the IntCal13 calibration curve (Reimer *et al.* 2013), allows for the differentiation of three phases of occupation. The enclosure's occupation started around 2321–2211 cal BC. After being intensively used for 145–281 years (occupation phases I and II, boundary phase I/II: 2204–2154 cal BC), its importance declined and was likely dismantled between 2086–2021 cal BC. Nevertheless, the radiocarbon data attest to the continued, but seemingly sporadic, reuse of the site after this date. At least the ring ditch and a few pits still existed as shallow depressions until the end of the Early Bronze Age.

The most interesting features discovered at the Pömmelte site are 29 shaft-like pits of approximately 1.80–2.40 m depth. They had been dug into the enclosure's ring ditch whose standard depth varied between 0.74–1.13 m. The objects found in and above those deep pits allow for the reconstruction of a “shaft pit sequence” of deliberate deposits found in primary stratigraphical contexts (category 1 depositions), secondary stratigraphical contexts (category 3 depositions) and at the transitional zone in between (category 2 depositions). This sequence will be discussed in detail below, as it is a key to understand the past activities that took place at the site and to elucidate the meaning of the circular enclosure (Spatzier 2017).

The human remains from Pömmelte

The spectrum of the human remains found at Pömmelte comprises several groups. Two of them, deviant burials and skull deposits, are integral elements of the shaft pit sequence of depositions. On the other hand, a variety of inhumations from simple grave pits attest “formal” burials. Further human remains – other deviant burials, isolated bones, a skull – may in some way be connected to the three aforementioned groups.

Deviant burials in shaft pits

Compared to the typical burials of the Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (see above) the complete articulated and incomplete disarticulated skeletons of several individuals are exceptional. They represent deviant burials (discussion of this term see Aspöck 2008) found amongst various other objects in shaft-like pits specifically intended to receive offerings or to discard ritual paraphernalia (see

below). The objects were located in primary stratigraphical contexts at the bottom of the shafts or in the shafts' lower infill. Being an integral element of category 1 depositions, they are heterogeneous regarding their state of articulation and their skeletal position.

Resembling "regular" flexed burials, the skeletal remains of two infants were discovered in two shafts, one at the bottom (Feature 41) and one within a cylindrical container made from organic material, possibly a basket, bark, or leather vessel, in the lowermost infill (Feature 300). At least in one case the careful arrangement of the bones is attested. If not due to preservation, the absence of mandible fragments in the first case and of parts of the extremities in the second case may indicate the inhumation of (partially) incomplete bodies.

Five other individuals found in three shafts unambiguously attest both deliberate disarticulation and "disrespectful discard". Their skeletons were found in unusual postures suggesting that the partly complete, partly dissected corpses had been thrown into the shafts. The remains of an infant and an adult female were found on top of each other above a not preserved cylindrical container made from organic material (Feature 1101; [Fig. 3.2](#)). Prior to deposition, the bodies were mutilated by removing the legs and the older individual's arms. The other parts of the torsos including the skulls were uncovered in anatomical composition. The discoveries in the lowermost section of another shaft are in some way comparable. Here the complete and articulated skeletons of a juvenile individual and a juvenile female individual were found in unusual postures on top of each other (Feature 1099; [Fig. 3.3](#)). As if wedged to fit into the narrow shaft, the older person's upper body was bent laterally, the legs extremely angled and the lower left leg unnaturally twisted so the left foot crossed the right foot and pointed backwards. Lying directly above, the younger person's legs were tilted sideways. The positioning of the arms, angled to the right with both wrists placed immediately adjacent to each other, may indicate that this individual was tied up. As will be discussed below, all four individuals bore perimortal skull traumas, and three of them also bore perimortal rib fractures. No traumas were observed for the fifth individual uncovered in the upper section of the lower infill of another shaft (Feature 758). The postcranial skeleton, including the mandible, was found anatomically arranged in a curved posture aslant head over heels. While the extremities below the knees and the right arm were missing, the neurocranium was located slightly higher in the shaft. Maybe this arrangement was caused by secondary intervention after the partial disarticulation of the body as a result of the process of decay.

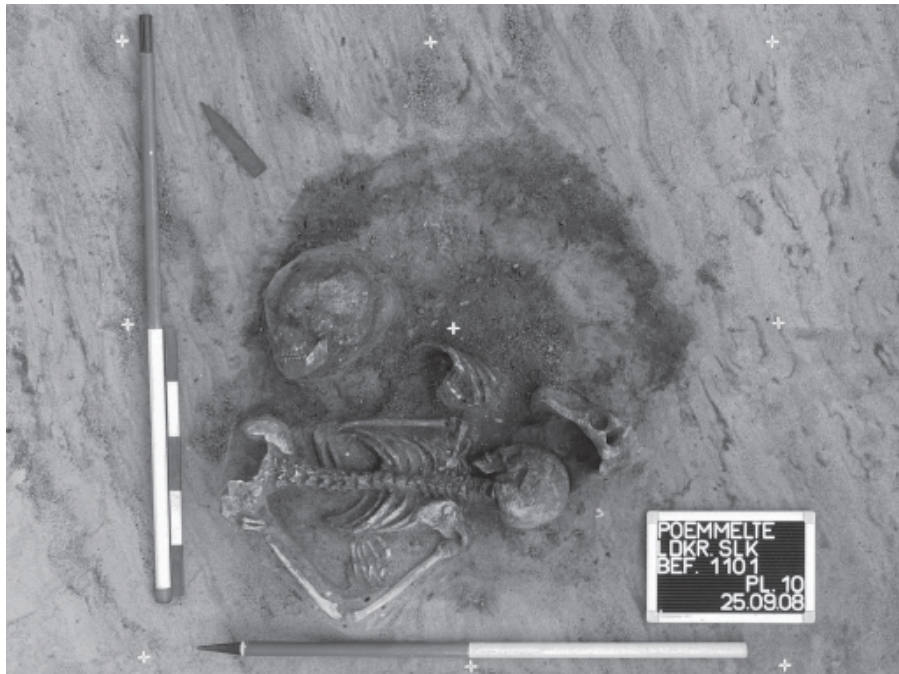


Figure 3.2. Deviant burial of one infant and one late adult female at the basis of shaft Feature 1099. (A. Spatzier)

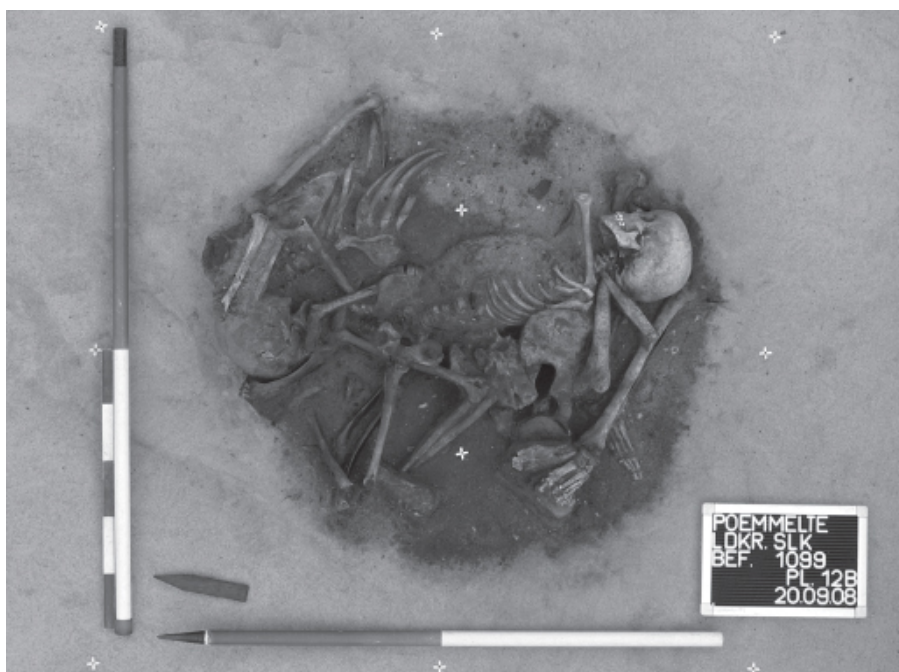


Figure 3.3. Deviant burial of one juvenile and one juvenile female above a container of organic material in shaft Feature 1101. (A. Spatzier)

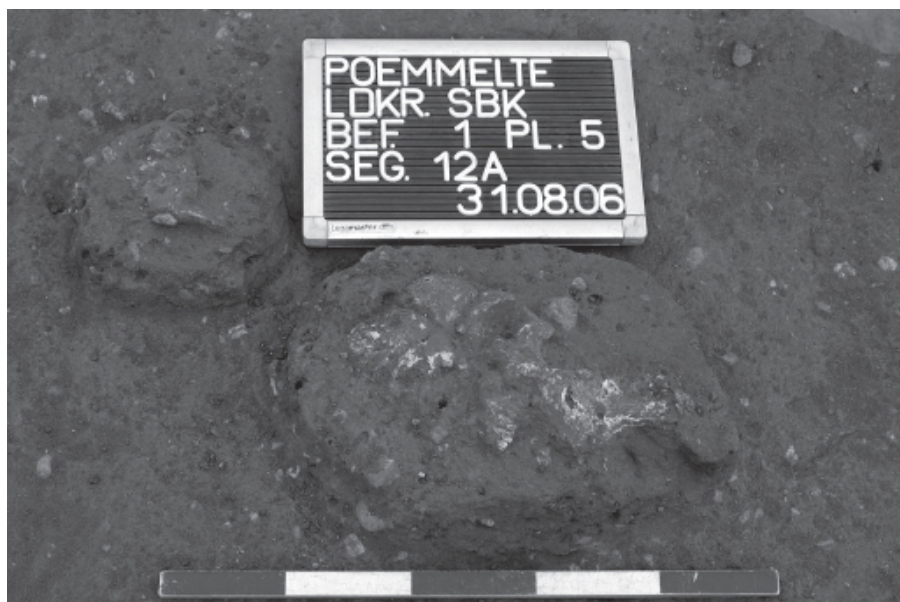


Figure 3.4. Viscerocranium deposited in ditch segment Feature 1-12 above shaft pit Feature 266. (A. Spatzier)

Deposited crania

Above three shaft pits, in secondary stratigraphical contexts, human crania were found, both single and in pairs. These defining items of category 3 depositions had been laid down on top of the already backfilled pits. They never occurred with the deviant burial discussed above. In two cases the intention of the act of depositing is emphasised by further contextual information.

In the first case, the viscerocranium was found facing upwards just a few centimetres above a hoard of three stone axes in the trough-shaped sunken ditch layers (Feature 1-12 above Feature 266; Fig. 3.4). Obviously, the items had been placed into a depression that still existed, above the not yet completely silted shaft. In the second case, the neurocranium of one individual and, located slightly sideways above, the cranium including the mandible of a second individual had been deposited in a pit subsequently dug into the already backfilled shaft (Feature 1-69 above Feature 1100). Without evidence of a secondary pit or a shallow depression, another pair of skulls, more precisely the neurocrania, were embedded centrally in the upper infill of a third shaft (Feature 1-20 above Feature 290). They were found lying on the right side and, a little sideways and slightly below, resting on the cranial vault.

With regard to the completeness of the skulls some additional remarks are necessary. As mentioned, in the first case only the viscerocranium without fragments of the lower jaw was detected. Due to poor preservation, it is unclear whether it may have been a skull mask or not, i.e. an object made from the facial part of a human skull to be worn or displayed as adornment, disguise, or item of performative or apotropaic function. Analogies are the skull masks discovered in the late Funnel Beaker/early Corded Ware settlement of Hunte 1, Diepholz district (Teegen 2007; 2010) or the Hallstatt period examples, one skull mask and one semi-finished mask, from the Madja-Hraška cave in Slovakia (Bárta 1958; Vlček and Kukla 1959). In comparison, the other instances from Pömmelte, were probably depositions of complete neurocrania and in one case, of a complete skull, of which large sections disintegrated naturally *in situ* as indicated by the poor condition of the preserved bones.

Flat grave inhumations

Several inhumations in simple flat graves of sub rectangular to oval shape are rather ordinary at first glance. Nonetheless they clearly show the multi-faceted treatment of the dead, whose remains were interred in the pits. Altogether ten single graves, two putative grave pits containing only a few surviving dental or skeletal remains, and a skull grave *sensu stricto* were found in Pömmelte (Fig. 3.5). The evidence suggests complex funeral rites including primary and secondary burials. In addition, several grave-like pits uncovered in the same area and occasionally adjacent to the graves likely represent cenotaphs or other features related to funerary practices.

Indicative of primary burials is the correct anatomical order of the remains of seven individuals, as far as could be determined all males, interred in flexed position on the left or right side, usually facing eastwards (Feature 558, 559, 613, 762, 765, 916, 960; Fig. 3.5, 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11 and Fig. 3.6). In one case only the skull and a scapula (Feature 729; Fig. 3.5–7) were likely displaced either by bioturbation or by human manipulation. The anthropogenically induced disorder of another inhumation is evident by the anatomical disarray of the skull and bones or bone fragments of the extremities, even though a general resemblance to a “regular” burial may be reflected (Feature 937; Fig. 3.5–10 and Fig. 3.7). The positions of the lower jaw besides the cranium and of femur fragments in the feature’s centre suggest a secondary burial of the skeletal remains of this individual. A similar assumption is plausible for two graves that either in central position

or near one corner contained only the skulls (Feature 615 and 660; Fig. 3.5–5, 6). While by context the first can be termed a skull burial, in the second case the skull either represents the remains of a complete skeleton or was deliberately placed in a position where it would anatomically belong in a regular burial. Furthermore, another feature that is not a grave contained a single human cranium. It can be ambiguously interpreted as a skull burial or a deposition (see below).

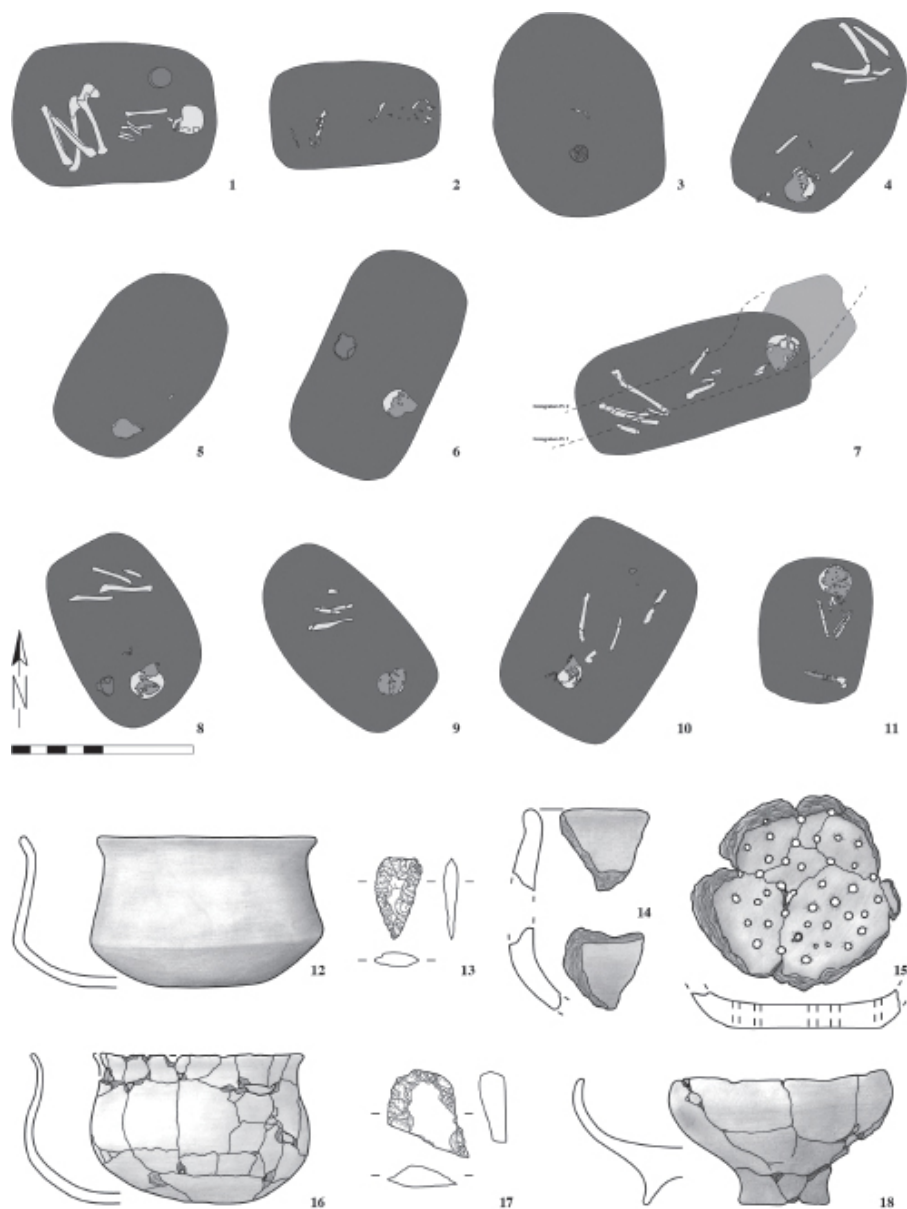


Figure 3.5. Inhumations in flat graves (1–11), grave goods (12, 16, 18) and other finds (13–15, 17). 1, 12 Feature 558; 2 Feature 559; 3, 15 Feature 574; 4 Feature 613; 5 Feature 615; 6, 16 Feature 660; 7, 17 Feature 729; 8, 18 Feature 765; 9 Feature 916; 10, 13–14 Feature 937; 11 Feature 960. Scale: graves 1:30; finds 1:3. (A. Spatzier)



Figure 3.6. Flat grave Feature 558 with inhumation in flexed posture on the left side. (A. Spatzier)



Figure 3.7. Flat grave Feature 937 with skull and bones in anatomical disarray. (A. Spatzier)

While most burials were devoid of any artefacts or only contained single sherds or flint artefacts, three burials were equipped with beakers and a pedestal bowl. The beakers (Fig. 3.5–12 and 16) can be attributed to the local late Bell Beaker culture (cf. Hille 2012, 30, Abb. 4), whereas similar bowls (Fig. 3.5, 18) can be found in contexts of the Final Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age (detailed discussion

Other human skeletal remains

Further human remains were found in other features of the Pömmelte enclosure. They have to be regarded as different from the deviant burials, cranial deposits, and flat grave inhumations discussed before. However, their particular contexts, their distribution, and their anthropologically determined sex and age suggest they were associated to these groups in one way or another.

Referring to their location in the enclosure's eastern half, their sex and age, the deviant burial(s) of one, maybe two individuals may have been linked to the flat grave inhumations. They come from the mid-section of the ditch segment (Feature 562) accompanying the enclosure's outer post ring in the southeastern quadrant. The remains of a male individual, i.e. remains of the lower extremities and the skull, were found resembling a regular flexed body posture. However, the incompleteness of the skeleton raises the question, as to whether they represent a primary burial or a carefully arranged secondary burial. Some metres to the south a few remains of the "second individual" were scattered in no apparent anatomical order. Due to poor preservation, these may belong to a single individual or be isolated skeletal elements of several individuals.

By location and age determination an association to the flat graves seems to be likely for a single cranium from a pit located in the southeast directly outside the enclosure's ring ditch (Feature 717). However, as it was surrounded by cattle bones and laid down in a feature not resembling a grave, it may also be a deposition.

A very general trend in associations with the deviant burials and/or the skull depositions found in the shaft pits can be perceived for the isolated human remains. This is most evident for postcranial bones of several individuals coming from the context of category 1 depositions of three shaft pits (Feature 290, 1102, 1106). With the exception of a long bone embedded horizontally in the centre of one shaft above floor level, their interpretation as intentional depositions themselves is ambiguous. A male juvenile's femur fragment, found surrounded by three small stone axes in another shaft and in a later stratigraphical context, potentially represents a category 2 or 3 deposition. Furthermore, remains of the jaws of three juveniles were embedded in an extensive find layer accumulated on the former surface of the uppermost Early Bronze Age ditch layer (Feature 1-71 and 1-72). The fragments prove the separation of the mandibles from the neurocrania

and the breakage of one skull prior to the moment they reached the archaeological record.

Chorological and chronological association to the Pömmelte enclosure

The association of the enclosure, on the one hand, and the deviant burials, depositions of human crania, and isolated human bones discovered in and above the shaft pits and the ring ditch, on the other hand, is obvious. These features were located in or were part of the architectural structure of the monumental sanctuary. Apart from the absence of any human remains in the southeastern sector of the ring ditch no conclusive distribution pattern is perceptible (Fig. 3.8).

In comparison, the flat graves and associated features show a distinct arrangement regarding distribution and orientation. They were exclusively located in the monument's eastern half and, with few exceptions, at more or less regular distances within the area between the ditch and the ring of pits (Fig. 3.8). An intriguing aspect is the alignment of the graves and inhumations. It demonstrates that the typical funerary customs of the Bell Beaker culture and Únětice culture in central Europe (see above) were altered in favour of the enclosure's circular layout. Deviating from the strict orientation along the north-south axis – as is common practice in both cultures – they were rotated to align tangentially to the ring structure (Fig. 3.9). Apart from this fact and taking into account the anthropological determinations, hypothetically the flexed left side inhumations may represent “Bell Beaker burials”, whereas the flexed right side inhumations may indicate “Únětice burials”. However, only one burial in left flexed posture equipped with an undecorated Bell Beaker (Feature 558; Fig. 3.5, 1, 12 and Fig. 3.6) supports this assumption. The tangential alignment is broken by two graves with radial orientation. While one contained only a few dental remains, the other is the disarranged inhumation likely representing a secondary burial (Feature 937; Fig. 3.5–10). Finally, a special status may be indicated for an individual buried at the east-southeastern main entrance and, in contrast to all other inhumations, facing towards the enclosure's interior (Feature 762). Unfortunately this grave was documented in a state of severe destruction caused by erosion.

The reference to the Pömmelte enclosure proves that the circular layout had already been established before the flat graves were dug. In accordance with the few and unspecific grave goods that can

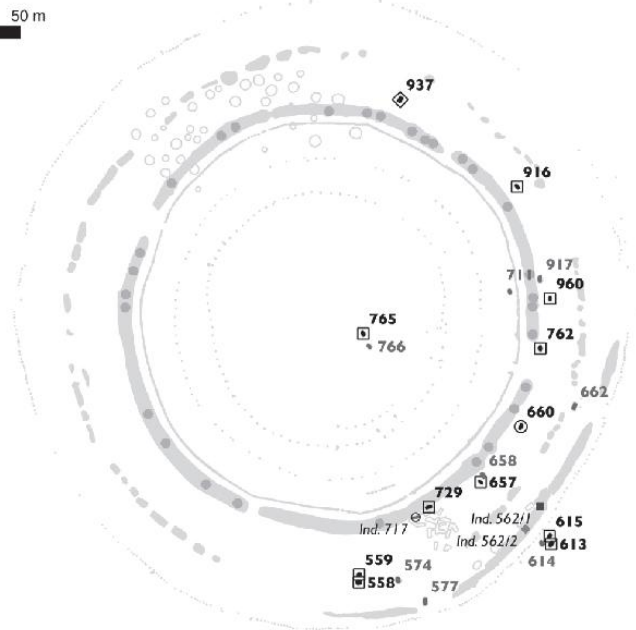
vaguely be assigned to the late 3rd millennium BC, the chronological closeness of the burials and the enclosure is obvious. Three radiocarbon dates demonstrate that the inhumations occurred throughout the enclosure's main occupation and once afterwards. Of interest is one burial (feat. 729) which corresponds to the common Bell Beaker burial customs. Stratigraphic evidence indicates that the grave dates to or possibly after the enclosure's second occupation phase, i.e. after 2204–2154 cal BC. Therefore, it can be excluded that all “Bell Beaker inhumations” discovered in Pömmelte are early inhumations to be paralleled with or prior to the formation of the enclosure. Though it might be tempting to postulate the anteriority of supposed “Bell Beaker graves” to putative “Únětice graves” (see above), there is no evidence to either confirm or refute such a hypothesis.

0 10 20 30 40 50 m



Flat graves and assoc. features

- flat graves
- associated features
- crouched burial
- skull burial
- ◇ disarranged burial
- crouched burial (ditch)
- ◆ deviant burial? (ditch)
- skull burial? (pit)



Shaft pit burials and assoc. remains

- deviant burial (in shaft)
- skull deposition (above shaft)
- ⚡ isolated skeletal remains (shaft / ditch)

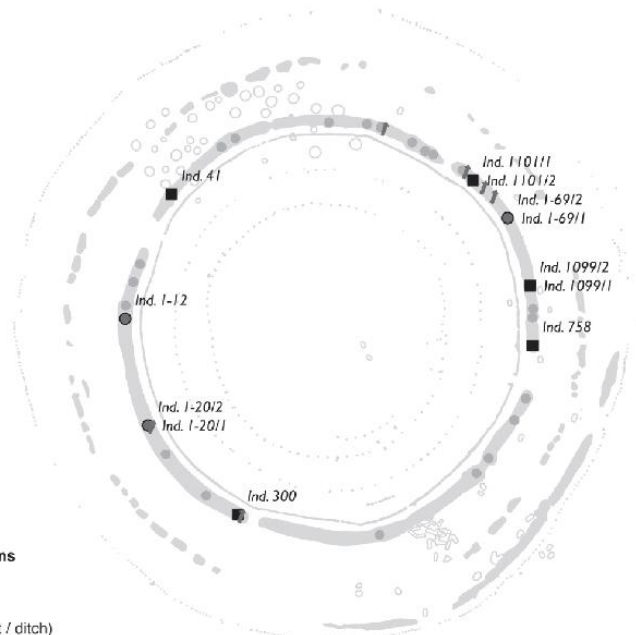


Figure 3.8. Allocation of the flat grave burials (black labels), grave-like features (grey labels), two deviant burials found the southeastern ditch segment (italic labels), the deviant burials and skull depositions found in and above the shaft pits (italic labels) and isolated human bones within the enclosure Pömmelte-Zackmünde, Saxony-Anhalt.



Figure 3.9. Alignment of the flat grave burials found at Pömmelte-Zackmünde, Saxony-Anhalt.

The deviant burials found in the southeastern ditch segment which, as mentioned above, may have been linked to the flat grave burials, were probably laid down around the end of the enclosure's main occupation. This is indicated by the radiocarbon date of a bone (2134–1985 cal BC) from the feature's southern section.

A detailed temporal sequence can be established for the other human remains, in particular the deviant burials and isolated bones included in category 1 depositions found in the shaft pits, combining stratigraphic evidence with radiocarbon dates. A shaft dug soon after the excavation of the ring ditch (Feature 300; phase occupation I), i.e. around the formation of the enclosure, can be dated to 2335–2205 cal BC. It contained the incomplete skeleton of a child. The other deviant burials and isolated bones from the shafts reached the archaeological record during the second occupation phase. Early in this phase one disarticulated skeleton was deposited around 2277–2139 cal BC (Feature 758), towards its end the deviant burial of an infant around 2202–2063 cal BC (Feature 41), and two individuals with perimortal traumas around 2195–2033 cal BC (Feature 1099). The proximity of time with the end of the main occupation may also be presumed for the human skulls deposited above three shafts (3rd category depositions), but can be neither confirmed nor rejected by absolute data. At about the time of the supposed dismantlement of the enclosure or a little afterwards, the isolated human jaw fragments

were embedded in the still existing shallow ditch. This is indicated by the radiocarbon date 2131–1965 cal BC derived from a cattle bone found nearby in this stratigraphical context.

Gendered burial practice at Pömmelte

Gender is, by self-identification and identification by others, a socially induced concept based on culturally perceived sexual differences. Although it is mainly related but not identical to biological sex, other factors, in particular age, are relevant to define gender categories. The correlation of these factors facilitates the creation of complex social structures (Díaz-Andreu 2005; Gilchrist 1999). Applying this polythetic approach, the conspicuous differences of the human remains found in Pömmelte suggest that they reflect specific social groups related to gender identity. The differences include biological sex and age, distribution patterns (spatial separation and spatial order), context (“regular” grave vs. deposition shaft), and the infliction of violence.

Summarising the evidence from contextual information and anthropological determination, in the case of the Pömmelte enclosure the divergence between the flat graves and the deviant burials from the shafts pits is most salient. They reflect two groups of contrasting character obviously representing distinct segments of society with a clear emphasis on gender segregation. The first group are young men, whose remains have been “formally” buried in “regular” flat graves (Tab. 3.1).

Table 3.1. Overview of the flexed burials, skull burials and deviant burials found in “regular” flat graves, a pit and the ditch segment related to the circular enclosure Pömmelte-Zackmünde, Saxony-Anhalt

	<i>Feat. no.</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age class</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Type of burial</i>	<i>Orientation</i>
Burials	0558		male	early adult	25–30	flexed, left side	E–W
	0559		–	late juvenile	17–20	flexed, left side	E–W
	0613		male	early adult	25–30	flexed, right side	SW–NE
	0615		–	early adult	21–25	flexed, right side?	SW–NE
	0657		–	early adult	21–25	?	NW–SE
	0729		male	early adult	21–25	flexed, left side	ENE–WSW
	0762		male	early adult	21–25	flexed, right side?	N–S
	0765		tend. male	late juvenile	17–20	flexed, right side	SSE–NNW
	0916		tend. male	late adult	35–40	flexed, right side	SE–NW
	0937		male	early adult	25–30	disarranged	SSW–NNE
	0960		male	early adult	21–25	flexed, left side	N–S
Skull burials	0660		–	juvenile–adult	–		
	0717		–	early adult	25–30		
Deviant burials	0562	ind. 1	male	early adult	21–25	flexed, right side	E–W
	0562	ind. 2	–	early adult	21–25		

Although adapted to the enclosures layout (see above), the concordance with the mortuary customs of the Bell Beaker culture and Únětice culture valid for men indicates they had male gender roles. The flat graves and associated grave-like features were exclusively located in the enclosure’s eastern half (Fig. 3.8). Signalling the connotation of this area with specific conceptual ideas, it seems to illustrate the association of the mortuary practices and the sun rising in the eastern hemisphere. The deviant burials from the ditch segment located in the enclosure’s southeastern quadrant and the cranium found in a pit located southeast outside the ring ditch fit into this pattern. The second group are deviant burials of children, adolescents, one of them female, and an adult female in deposition shafts (Tab. 3.2). Due to age-dependent determination uncertainties, the sex of the sub-adult individuals is unknown. The question arises whether or not they were female, did not yet underlie the female-male dichotomy, and/or were regarded as being closely tied to the female sphere. At first glance such assumptions are based on sex identity. But they may point towards a gender-like perception of sub-adults before their biological sex became socially approved. The restriction to infants and adolescents tends to be reflected by the skull depositions and, even more so, by the isolated skeletal elements found in the shafts and the ring ditch, except for a femur fragment of an adult to mature male embedded in the upper infill of one shaft. In contrast to the grave distribution, no reference to the monument’s eastern half is evident for the human skeletal remains just mentioned (Fig. 3.8). While common Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age burials of the same age/sex

reflect the typical funerary customs outlined in the introductory section, the children, adolescents and females of the second group from Pömmelte were distinctly set apart. Regarding their location or the missing alignment of eastward facing burials, they do not emblematised a cosmology that related death with the eastern hemisphere.

Table 3.2. Overview of the deviant burials, skull depositions and isolated skeletal remains found in shaft pits and the ring ditch of the circular enclosure Pömmelte-Zackmünde, Saxony-Anhalt

	<i>Feat. no.</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age class</i>	<i>Age</i>
Deviant burial	0041		–	infant I	3–5
	0300		–	infant I	2–4
	0758		–	infant I/II	5–7
	1099	ind. 1	–	infant I/II	5–7
	1099	ind. 2	female	late adult	30–40
	1101	ind. 1	–	early juvenile	10–14
	1101	ind. 2	female	early juvenile	15–17
Skull deposition	0001–12		tend. male	late juvenile	17–20
	0001–20		–	juvenile–mature	–
	0001–20		–	juvenile–mature	–
	0001–69		–	sub-adult	–
	0001–69		–	infant I/II	4–8
Isolated skeletal remains	0001–71	teeth	–	late juvenile	17–20
	0001–71	teeth	–	early juvenile	12–18
	0001–72	teeth	–	late juvenile	17–20
	0290	dist. foot phalanx I	–	juvenile–adult	–
	0290	5th metatarsal	–	infant I	0–6
	0300	femoral fragment	male	adult–mature	–
	1102	femoral fragment	–	infant I	0–6
	1106	long bone fragment	–	–	–

Ring ditches and violence in the central European Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age

The flat graves discovered at Pömmelte reveal multifaceted funeral practices ranging from primary and secondary burials to potential “symbolic” graves or other features related to mortuary practices. In this regard, they are not uncommon in the context of the Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age of central Europe (Ernée and Majer 2009; Ernée, Müller and Rassmann 2012; Hubensack 2013; Kolář 2012; Petrík *et al.* 2012, 54). What renders them exceptional are the demographical restriction and their location within a circular enclosure of primary ritual significance. The burial at a site charged

with symbolical meaning can be interpreted as reverence to the dead, an act of honour and therefore as evidence for the outstanding social status of these mostly young men.

This interpretation can be affirmed by the association of ring ditches with high social status in the burial customs of the 3rd millennium BC and, possibly, the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. It has been suggested that circular ditches together with the erection of barrows signalled individualization and membership to the social elite (Czebreszuk and Pospieszny 2011). Two studies concerning the hierarchy of the eastern Bell Beaker culture identify ring ditches as one of the characteristics of the uppermost social group (Bosch 2008, 202; Schwarz 2008, 337–338). Although rare in the Early Bronze Age, the ditch enclosing the “princely grave” of Leubingen, Thuringia, Germany (Höfer 1906, 8; Götze, Höfer and Zschiesche 1909, 108–109) seems to indicate that this element still was of important symbolic value for burials of members of the elite during this period.

Compared to the common funerary customs of the late 3rd millennium BC and the early 2nd millennium BC the deviant burials from the shaft pits of the Pömmelte enclosure are exceptional in many ways. This is demonstrated convincingly by their depositional context allowing one to view them as elements of ritual-like activities (see below), by the postures and the completeness of the skeletons, by the age and sex of the individuals, and by at least some of them having been victims of violence. Again, the location in a circular sacral architecture emphasises the extraordinary character of these infants, adolescents and females.

The individuals with perimortal traumas provide a key for the interpretation of the Pömmelte deviant burials comparing them with evidence for violence detected on human skeletons dated to the Central European Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age. Such evidence comes almost exclusively from grave contexts and from burials conforming to the prevailing funerary practices. Clearly linked to the male sex, cranial traumas are quite frequent in the Corded Ware complex, but rare in the Bell Beaker culture (Lidke 2005, 163–166). The salient percentage of healed injuries suggests a moderate, controlled mode of violence in the 3rd millennium BC (Lidke 2005, 225; Peter-Röcher 2007, 169). In the Early Bronze Age violence markers become even less frequent, but now are correlated with an increase of unhealed injuries (Peter-Röcher 2007, Abb. 40A, 45, 59, 64). The traumas were almost exclusively detected on male skeletal remains of mainly juvenile to early adult age. The infrequency of Early Bronze Age violence markers are confirmed by some old findings

(Grimm 1939; Ullrich 1972, 36, 43) and a recent study on burials of the Únětice Culture (pers. comm. V. Hubensack; Hubensack 2013). Contrastingly exceptional is a feature excavated near Herzogbirbaum, dist. Korneuburg, Lower Austria (Lauermann and Pany-Kucera 2012). In a pit, six skeletons and one femur of two infants, two juveniles and three adult females laid stacked around a central ash accumulation. Perimortal blunt force traumas were detected on the skulls of two females and one infant, the third female had perimortal fractures of the upper and lower left limbs. The complex is interpreted as possibly resulting from raiding and the subsequent “discard” of the individuals (Lauermann and Pany-Kucera 2012, 230). This is in particular important, as the pit was located within an Early Bronze Age circular enclosure and therefore remarkably resembles the deviant burials from the Pömmelte shaft pits.

Evidence for rituals at the Pömmelte enclosure

The 29 shaft pits mentioned earlier are crucial to understand the meaning of the Pömmelte enclosure. Regarding their infilling and the local soil conditions, the digging and closing of the pits happened in close temporal succession, indicating that the activities directly related to the shafts were short-term events. Based on stratigraphic evidence these events took place when the ditch was open and free of extensive sediment intrusion, when it was partially silted, and when it had been backfilled by hand.

The shafts were explicitly intended to receive deliberate depositions. This is evident from their content which, as demonstrated by the context information and the array of objects included, must have been intentionally selected and laid down. The stratigraphical context of both the objects and the shafts in relation to the ditch layers facilitate the reconstruction of a multi-step sequence of depositions. This “shaft pit sequence” comprises three categories which obviously had diverse and distinct meanings. The category 1 depositions were found in the shafts’ lowermost sections. Apart from the deviant burials and isolated human remains focussed on in this chapter, they included fragments of deliberately broken vessels with a predominance of vessels suitable to contain liquids, animal bones often showing cut or chop marks, and querns. In most cases the objects were located within or above containers from thin organic material like baskets or vessel made from bark or leather, which are not preserved. The category 2 depositions, consisting of cattle mandibles and especially quern stones, were located in the middle

sections of the shafts. They may have had a “sealing function”, possibly marking the end of the processes associated with the category 1 deposits. The category 1 and 2 depositions most likely occurred in close temporal succession at various times during the main occupation phase of the enclosure, i.e. a time span of 145 to 281 years (see above), and at least once even afterwards. In contrast, depositions of the category 3 – the last step of the “shaft pit sequence” – were laid down considerably, perhaps up to three centuries, later. It is unclear, whether this happened on different occasions or only at the end of the main occupation phase. The category 3 depositions, defined by the human crania discussed above and additional stone axes, were found above the shafts and in one case located in a pit dug into the shaft infill. Further secondary pits above other shafts contained no finds, but the deposited objects may have not survived. In addition, a category 4 of “final deposits” was found within the features of the enclosure’s post rings and the palisade. Stratigraphical evidence and radiocarbon dates suggest it was linked to the dismantling of the Pömmelte enclosure in the 21st century cal BC.

Applying the toolset proposed by D. Garrow (2012, 94–95), in a continuous spectrum of what is termed structured depositions the Pömmelte evidence belong to the “odd deposits” end. They are the outcome of ritualisation practices making them consciously different from “other, usually more quotidian, activities” (Bell 1992, 74). R. Rappaport (1999, 32–50) and C. Bell (1997, 139–169) agree, despite differing in terminology, that the characteristics of rituals or ritual-like activities are encoding by others than the performers (largely reflected by the terms rule-governance and traditionalism), by formality, invariance, and performance (in addition, Bell adds sacral symbolism as a feature). From archaeological evidence, only the performance criterion cannot or can hardly be deduced directly. The depositional sequence described for the deposits discovered at the Pömmelte enclosure obviously matches the other characteristics. As evident from contextual information and material culture, the sequence reveals formalised, relatively invariant and rule-governed depositional practices. They existed or were handed down over a considerable time span and therefore must have been encoded by others than the performers. Thus, at least the acts of deposition can be identified as ritual acts. The selection patterns reflected by the objects deposited and, in particular, their allocation to the categories suggests that also the actions performed before were ritual activities. This evidence facilitates to identify the circular enclosure of Pömmelte-Zackmünde as a place for the performance of rituals.

The honoured, the sacrificed, and gender-based violence in Pömmelte

The main key to understand the human remains found in Pömmelte is the contextual framework of the circular enclosure. By polythetically integrating evidence it can be interpreted as a monumental architecture of highest order meaning – a sanctuary. The basic arguments are the multi-tiered architectural design, a high frequency of deliberate depositions, distinct distribution patterns of finds and features, and possible solar alignment of the main entrances. They allow to view the enclosure as a place for ritual activities, to deduce a hierarchical space structure where different areas had specific meanings, and to ponder symbolical connotations of both the architecturally defined space and the enclosure as a whole (Spatzier 2017, 259–268).

The burials, deviant burials, skull depositions, and isolated human skeletal remains allow the conclusion that one of the enclosure's multiple functions was to serve as a place to reinforce social order. This is most clearly demonstrated by two groups standing in polarizing contrast to each other: on the one side inhumations of young males in “regular” graves, on the other side deviant burials of infants, juveniles, and females. Without claiming to provide an all-encompassing explanation two interpretative approaches are presented here.

That the Pömmelte enclosure served as a socially indicative burial ground is verified by the skeletal remains of mainly young males inhumated in “regular” flat graves. As discussed above, in the Final Neolithic and possibly the Early Bronze Age individuals inhumed in graves enclosed by ring ditches were members of the social elite. Similar assumptions were made for the burials documented at Stonehenge (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2009, 36–37). It was suggested that the individuals may have been members of a ruling elite family using the monument as a long-term high status burial ground in the 3rd millennium BC. This interpretation is too far reaching for the Pömmelte enclosure, although the “formal” burial at the monument obviously was socially indicative. Regarding the grave goods and construction the flat grave burials are modest. This contradicts the notion that the individuals buried there were high ranking members of society. In consequence, other filters seem to be reflected in the archaeological record. The concept of liminality may help as an interpretive model. According to Victor W. Turner (1967; 1969; 1974b) being liminal is equal to being outside normal society, an ambiguous state of being, where existing social rules do not apply and

frequently are inverted. During the second or seclusion phase of *rites de passage* as described by A. van Gennep (1909), this temporarily leads to the loss of any social status and the related insignia – even if the “liminal individuals” possessed high social status before and will obtain high social status after the liminal period. But liminality does not necessarily need to be transitory. As *communitas* – a term introduced by Turner to denominate an “unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated ... community” (Turner 1969, 69) – it may become fixed or relatively permanent (Turner 1974a, 361). The implication for the Pömmelte flat grave burials may be that at the time of death the individuals were “liminal individuals”. Their remains had been buried in a non-ostentatious manner because they were beyond common social rating. Regardless of their hypothetical high rank in society, the location and its meaning support the assumption of an extraordinary status of those men. They participated in a cosmology that associated mortuary practice and the sun rising in the eastern hemisphere, thereby analogically manifesting the symbolism of the belief in reincarnation or afterlife. The burial within and in obvious reference to a monumental sanctuary, comparable to the burial *ad sanctos* in Christian churches (e.g. Johnson 2012), likely was an act of reverence to honour the dead.

The deviant burials found in the shaft pits rather leave the impression of disrespect and exclusion from the cosmology commonly reflected in the mortuary customs of the late 3rd millennium BC. Regarding their state of articulation and the skeletal postures documented, they may have been something like “discarded waste”. Mainly based on contextual and anthropological evidence, it can even be formulated that the bodies and torsos were “discarded ritual waste”. Firstly, the remains of these infants, adolescents and females were integral elements of depositions clearly showing the characteristics of ritual activities. Secondly, this is likely true because of their state of articulation and, in particular, the perimortal traumas of four individuals of which one was in bonds. In contrast to their unusual deposition context evidence of violence dated to the Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in central Europe is almost exclusively linked to graves and the burials conform to the prevailing culture-specific funerary practices. In the light of the controversial discussion about human sacrifices in central European prehistory (cf. Rind 1996, 99–174, 123–139; Lidke 2005, 206–209; Peter-Röcher 1997; 2003, 95) such an interpretation might go too far. But at least it may be suggested that the Pömmelte individuals with perimortal traumas

were ritual killings, i.e. deliberately killed for ritual reasons. Whether the other shaft burials too were sacrifices, ritual killings, something similar or exceptional inhumations for other reasons, can hardly be assessed.

The two contrasting groups – the flat graves and the deviant burials from shaft pits – not only facilitate to detect a strict gender segregation of the human remains found at Pömmelte. They also indicate that violence was selective and gender-specific. This evidently was important in the context of the activities that took place in or were related to the enclosure. As the perimortal traumas show, violence targeted infants, adolescents, and females whose bodies and torsos were impiously thrown into deposition shafts. The contextual evidence may suggest that the infliction of violence was legitimised by its ritual meaning and perhaps became meaningful as publicly performed acts of killing. Alternatively, the violent deaths may have resulted from interpersonal or intergroup conflicts for non-ritual reasons like raiding. However, at the least it can be stated that the victims of gender-specific violence were meaningful in ritual activities. Being different with respect to how these individuals died, were treated and afterwards discarded they socio-politically defined what is normal. Thereby they likely represented one element helping to maintain what may be described as “cosmological order”, a major objective of the activities carried out at the monumental sanctuary of Pömmelte-Zackmünde.

Appendix - anthropological analysis of the human skeletal remains

Marcus Stecher and Kurt W. Alt

Methods

The skeletal remains were analysed by standard methods for age and sex determination (Ferembach, Schwidetzky and Stloukal 1980; Szilvássy 1988; White and Folkens 2005), osteometric assessment (Bräuer 1988), stature estimation (Pearson 1899), and in order to epigenetic variants (Alt 1997; Hauser and de Stefano 1989; Rösing 1982). Additional analysis was conducted to document taphonomic changes and pathological findings (e.g. Aufderheide and Rodríguez-Martín 1998; Binford 1981; Haglund and Sorg 1997; Ortner 2003). In the following the results are summarised with focus on the taphonomy and paleopathology (Stecher in press).

Age and Sex Distribution

The excavations at Pömmelte-Zackmünde not only revealed complete and partial skeletons but also isolated skeletal elements. The minimum number of individuals is 27: five infants, four juveniles and 18 adults (Tab. 3.1 and Tab. 3.2). Concerning the sex determination of the adults were identified one female and seven males as well as 10 sex-undetermined individuals.

Paleopathology

The skeletal remains exhibited numerous pathological bone lesions that can be observed on prehistoric skeletal series (Ortner 2003; Roberts and Manchester 2005). Teeth and jaw bones show caries and periodontal diseases. The spine and several long bones are affected by osteoarthritis. Regarding stress markers, enamel hypoplasia were recorded. The bad preservation and high fragmentation of the

excavated bones prevented a more detailed analysis respectively an epidemiological evaluation. However, a number of observed traumatic bone lesions presented below allow some insights into the circumstances surrounding the formation of this monument.

Skeletal injuries by violence could be observed at each of two individuals of the shaft pits Feature 1099 (child 5–7 years old and adult female) and 1101 (child/young juvenile 10–14 years and juvenile female 15–17 years). In all these cases the violence was caused around the time of death (perimortal), which means shortly before or shortly after death (Lovell 1997; Sauer 1998). The injury pattern for the observed bone lesions points to interpersonal violence (Rogers 2004). The skull traumas of both individuals of the shaft pit Feature 1099 (Fig. 3.10 and 3.11) indicates the application of blunt force (Taylor 2001; York and York 2011). In contrast, the younger individual of shaft pit Feature 1101 (Fig. 3.12) was hit on the head with a stone axe, hatchet, or an adze, whereas the juvenile girl shows an injury from an arrowhead or knife-like instrument (Fig. 3.13). In three of the cases presented, the existing trauma was lethal. Only in the case of the 15–17-year-old girl from the shaft Feature 1101 the head injury seems not to be life-threatening. Due to poor preservation of her skeleton no statements on potential postcranial injuries can be made.

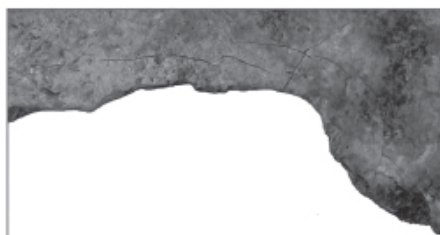
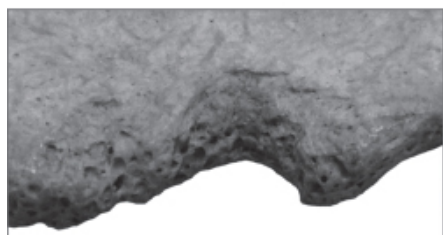


Figure 3.10. Severe perimortal blunt force trauma involving the right skull side of a 30–40-year-old female (ind. 1099/2). The close-ups display the carnivore-gnawing mark (left) and fissures accompanying the rim of the fracture (right). (M. Stecher)

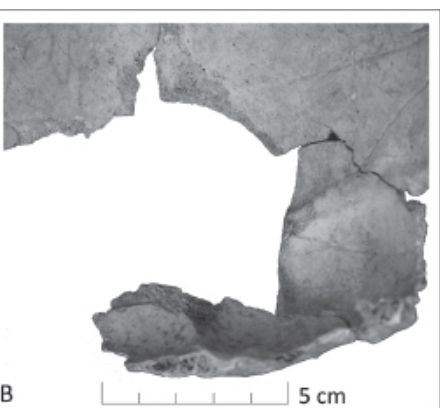


Figure 3.11. (A) External view of the perimortal blunt force trauma on the occipital bone of a 30–40-year-old female (ind. 1099/2). (B) Internal view of the occiput. Internal bevelling is partially evident along the rims of the fracture. (M. Stecher)



Figure 3.12. Two perimortem semi-sharp force traumas on the right parietal bone of a 10–14-year-old juvenile (ind. 1101/1) with radiating/concentric fracture lines (dark-lined boxes). Ellipses mark the impact areas, the light-colored circle indicates the point where the dorsal radiating fracture line of the superior trauma ends in the fissure of the inferior trauma. (M. Stecher)

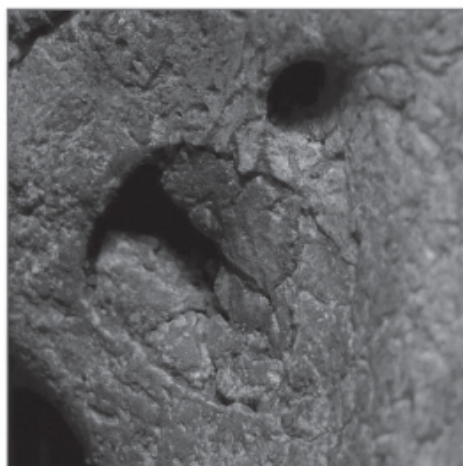


Figure 3.13. Skull of a 14–17-year-old (ind. 1101/2) female with a perimortal puncture wound related to pointed weapon below the right orbit on the zygomatic process of the maxilla. The skull was laterally compressed by sediment pressure. (M. Stecher)

Taphonomy

Irregular burials in shaft pits

The cranium of the female from shaft pit Feature 1099 shows a notch-like bone defect at the dorsal end of the fracture line which resulted from a trauma to the right side of the skull (Fig. 3.10), and peeling close to the angle of her right 9th rib. Both bone defects, as well as the absence of cut marks, may indicate access to the body by carnivores, possibly dogs or wolves (Pickering *et al.* 2013). That would also explain the missing skull fragments. In case of the individuals found in

shaft pit Feature 1101 the absence of extremities is of special interest. No bones or bone fragments of the arms of the younger child's skeleton were found and all four extremities of the juvenile girl are missing. Despite the fact that the preserved skeletal elements were found in anatomical order the limbs may have been removed before deposition. However, no corresponding cut or chop marks were recorded.

Skull depositions

Five isolated skulls were recovered, but due to their poor state of preservation it remains unclear if they represent primary or secondary depositions (Duday 2009). Although no direct traces of manipulation were observed, the particular state of preservation of these crania points to different taphonomic processes. Of these skulls, only the one of a young child was deposited completely with mandible in ditch segment Feature 1-69 above shaft pit Feature 1100. In a second case of a male juvenile the preserved remains of the facial skeleton could be used as a skull mask (ditch segment Feature 1-12 above shaft pit Feature 266). The remaining three skulls are too poorly preserved, so that they do not provide useful taphonomic information.

Isolated human remains

Two femoral fragments of both an adult male and a child were found in the shafts Feature 300 and 1102. The bones show spiral fractures caused probably perimortally but the isolated position and the absence of traces of manipulation complicates their interpretation.

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Chapter 4

The role of violence in the construction of prehistoric masculinities

Lisbeth Skogstrand

Introduction

Prehistoric warfare has often been presented as a bloodless theatre where violence and its lethal and destructive effects on society are mainly ignored. Warriors are portrayed as brave-hearted heads of society and weapons are symbols of superior social rank, not potentially deadly apparatus (Vandkilde 2006a, 64; see also Østigård 2006). Prehistoric warfare was usually not as lethal as wars in modern times but numerous findings of human remains with traumas from the Bronze Age as well as the Early Iron Age and the large weapon hoards in Denmark and northern Germany, most likely from defeated armies and warrior bands, indicate that comprehensive battles and even massacres occurred in Scandinavia during this period.

However, warfare and violence are not limited to specific battles and killings, but influence society on a general basis. Warriors train and prepare for war within their societies, get killed or wounded, and return to their communities with traumas and injuries for life. Despite its tremendous human costs, societies all over the world develop systems and institutions which adapt to and encourage warfare and warriors in various ways.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the social organisation of warfare and explore how the meaning of violence and its impact on the construction of masculinity changes according to its cultural context. I will pursue the following questions: How can we approach

violence as culturally meaningful? How do systems of warfare change and how are they interrelated with other social structures, like masculinity? Does the meaning of violence influence on the construction of masculinity and how does it change over time?

The approach derives from a Ph.D. project that examines how notions of masculinities were expressed in funeral rituals from the Late Bronze Age to the Roman period (1100 BC–400 AD) in eastern Norway and at Funen in Denmark (Skogstrand 2016). The time span and areas were chosen to study long term changes and geographical variations, and the data material was selected on the basis of osteological analyses of the human bones in a large number of burials from these areas (Holck 1993; Thrane 2004). The burials of 800 osteologically sexed individuals were analysed to explore possible connections between sex, physiological age and a long range of different variables. In the following, some of the results of these analyses will be discussed in more depth. In the Ph. D. project (Skogstrand 2016) three periods and regions turned out as especially relevant with regard to the development of the warrior role, that is Late Bronze Age at Funen (1100–500 BC), Roman period (1–400 AD) especially around 200 AD in the inland of eastern Norway, and the Late Roman period (200–400) in Østfold, at the coast of eastern Norway (Fig. 4.1). These will form the frameworks of area and time in this article.



Figure 4.1. Map of Scandinavia and close up of Denmark and Funen to the left and southern Norway with all counties in eastern Norway marked to the right. (© Google Maps 2013 and Wikimedia Commons)

Gender and masculinity

Gender influences almost every aspect of human social life and is one of the most fundamental forms of social categorisation we know. Gender is individual identity and social structure, and is performed, lived and experienced. Its cultural meaning is produced, reproduced, or changed through social practice and is constantly renegotiated (Butler 1990; Moore 1994; Sørensen 2000). Gender is the production of subjects in relation to other subjects, and in relation to artefacts (Haraway 2004, 328). In other words, gender is elusive and hard to pin down, as it is nothing in itself but always a feature of something else.

Gendered norms work differently upon individuals, depending on their sex. A person with a male body often meets another set of social expectations regarding their behaviour and different actions, capabilities or appearances are expected of them, than persons with female bodies. Hence, masculinity can initially be defined as the practice, abilities or performances that give a male credit *as a man* in a particular social and historical context. Females can also act, appear, or hold abilities considered masculine, but this will usually not give them recognition as men (see Clover 1993, for a broader discussion).

Interestingly, however, it may discredit them as women. Acknowledgement as a man is not straightforward but depends on individual variables like age, class, ancestry or ethnicity as well as the specific social contexts. Accordingly, a man is not necessarily all, or even exclusively, those who possess a male body, but the cultural conceptions of the male body would usually be one of its main reference points.

From an archaeological point of view the association between sexual differences between male and female bodies and gender is crucial. A dichotomous conception of sex is a gendered construction (Butler 1990; Butler 1993) and a distinction between sex and gender has proven rather insufficient to understand gender in prehistory (see e.g. Alberti 2006; Dommasnes 1996; Meskell 1999; Sørensen 2000). Still, all known societies recognize bodily differences between males and females, it is what they make of these differences and how they construct gendered categories, norms and meaning that varies extraordinarily (Moore 1994, 71). As an analytical concept sex is not meant to describe reality but to make realities accessible to investigation. The interpretations in this work are based, in part, on osteological analyses of human remains and comprehensive studies of how individuals were treated in funeral contexts with regard to their osteologically estimated sex (Skogstrand 2016).

Violence has cultural meaning

Studies in violence often discuss violent acts as anti-social and undesirable behaviour. But violent acts also carry meaning as they are always performed within a cultural and social context and between social actors. Violence occurs in many forms and levels of severity and communicates, establishes, or confirms relations of power within society. Repeated use of violence may be legally sanctioned, conventionally supported and even carry virtue (Tolan 2007). Violence is thus not only instrumental and functional actions to impose will and dominate other people but will always communicate meaning depending on context. Further, violent acts are sometimes important elements of ritual and symbolic performances (Martin and Anderson 2014, 9), of games and to solve social conflicts (Torres-Rouff and King 2014). In other words, certain types of violence are legitimised and encouraged by cultural concepts and norms and this cultural violence may also be central in the constitution of masculinity (Galtung 1996).

Violence involves an intention to physically injure or coerce

another human being and is accordingly differentiated from unintentional harm caused by accident or negligence (Tolan 2007, 6). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (World Health Organization 1996, 5; see also World Health Organization 2014, 2). This broad understanding of violence might be useful to discuss not only the social consequences of specific violent acts but also how the potential threat or ideals of violent behaviour affected societies in prehistory.

Violence in prehistoric contexts may be proven directly by identifying bodily injuries like skeletal traumas in individual victims. Examinations of human remains can reveal traces of deadly violence as well as healed wounds and fractures, sometimes indicating multiple beatings during life and generally inadequate living conditions (Martin and Anderson 2014). The demographic composition of victims may indicate specific circumstances of violence. Combats are typically fought by young adult to middle adult males, and accordingly, the age and sex composition of victims of violence might indicate whether they result from battles or attacks on settlements (Flohr *et al.* 2014, 17).

Indirectly, violence can be identified through the occurrence of specialised weapons primarily intended for use on humans, like swords and halberds, defensive armour like shields and helmets, defensive structures like fortified settlements, or depictions of fighting and written sources describing violent practices (Horn 2013; Molloy 2010). Accordingly, the most comprehensive bodies of evidence of prehistoric violence are probably related to warfare.

War systems and masculinity

Warfare includes a wide variety of different forms of behaviour and can be defined as “...organised purposeful group action, directed against other groups that may or may not be organised for similar action, involving the actual or potential application of lethal force.” (Ferguson 1984, 5). Even though conflicts of interest over e.g. resources are inevitable, violent resolutions of the conflicts are not, and to have a reason to fight does not necessarily entail action (Black 1998, 35; Chagnon 1990, 80).

Warriors have, across cultures and through time, almost always

been males. In nearly all documented present-day non-stately hunter-gatherer or agrarian societies, warfare is one of the spheres in which the exclusion of females is most formalised, and gender taboos concerning weapons are common (Goldschmidt 1989; Goldstein 2004). There are well known exceptions; female warriors do exist, but in pre-history as well as in historically known cases, they make up a very low percentage (Clover 1993; Hedeager 2011, 121; Jones 2000; Joyce 2008, 73–75). Even today when females join armies all over the world, the overwhelming majority of soldiers are males, and females who sign up do it on men's premises; they become "one of the guys" so to speak, and their participation reproduces rather than changes the masculine gendering of the warriors (Goldstein 2004). Hence, warfare should be regarded as a gendered practice caused by, creating, and reproducing gendered structures and ideas.

Thomas Hobbes (2001, 46) once said that "the nature of war consisteth not in actual fighting, but the known disposition thereto during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary". In line with this statement, Joshua Goldstein (2004, 3) argues that the *potential* for war matters more than the actual outbreak of wars in the construction of gendered war roles and masculinity. War is not only series of violent events or battles but a system with continuity through time. Goldstein (2004, 3) defines *war system* as the interrelated ways that societies organise themselves to participate in potential or real wars, how they recruit, train, and organise warriors and warfare, and how this affects and is affected by the organisation of society and cultural beliefs. War systems influence power structures and the division of labour, and produce social structures and hierarchies that define who may become as well as who controls the warriors. War systems also create ideologies that legitimise the consumption of wealth necessary to raise a warrior band or an army, and generate ideals for the individual warrior which influence social norms and notions of masculinity even outside the warfare context (Black 1998; Goldschmidt 1989; Goldstein 2004). Warrior ideology motivates men to prepare for and participate in warfare and strongly influence on the construction of masculinity (Braudy 2005; Dudink *et al.* 2004; Goldstein 2004; Higate and Hopton 2005; Mosse 1990; Spierenburg 1998). War systems and the cultural understanding of masculinity are thus closely interrelated and in many societies violence can be seen as part of the very social fabric and represent a characteristic of social normality (Molloy 2007a, 10).

Warriorhood is, in itself, a complex social institution which is dependent on a variety of overlapping and disparate social identities

and their interactions. The warrior role is constantly negotiated in relation to other social identities and needs to be confirmed and maintained in a dynamic process of self-definition and definition by others. Warriors gain their identities from the action, interaction and discourses in specific power networks and warrior identity is enabled and constrained by social structure (Vandkilde 2006b, 395–396). Warriorhood is associated with dominance, coercion and violence, and when institutionalized it constitutes a dominant field of power (Vandkilde 2006a, 69; Vandkilde 2006b, 393–396).

Culture after culture converge in treating masculinity as something that must be created by individual and collective will against the force of instinct or choosing the easy way. Gender identity is often applied as a tool with which societies induce men to fight. If you don't perform as is expected of you as a man, you run the risk of not being considered as one (Goldstein 2004, 264). *Rites de passage* from boyhood to manhood, where manhood is achieved only by bravely enduring harsh tests, are widespread (Gennep 1999 [1908]). In other words, the practice of warfare produces and depend on cultural norms and concepts of masculinity that fit men for war by motivating them to endure trauma, master fear, and fight in order to construct a masculine identity, claim status of manhood, and avoid disgrace (Goldstein 2004, 264–266).

The understanding and cultural meaning of violence and how notions of violence influence masculine practice and the construction of masculinity will depend on the war system and general cultural context. In the following, I will discuss three different cases, Late Bronze Age Denmark, and two different regions of Roman period eastern Norway, and explore how specific war systems influence on the warrior role and thereby on the meaning of violence and its effect on the construction of masculinity.

The masculinity of Late Bronze Age martial art

In the Scandinavian Early Bronze Age (1700–1100 BC) bronze weapons, and especially swords, were introduced in the burials in Denmark. In period II (1500–1300 BC), more than 2,500 swords were deposited in inhumation burials, often in monumental mounds, along with various prestige objects (Aner and Kersten 1973; Kristiansen 1984; Kristiansen 1998, 77; Thrane 2005, 621). By the transition to the Late Bronze Age (1100–500 BC), cremation became the universal burial custom. Weapons generally disappeared from the burial context, and were only occasionally deposited in hoards. At the same

time the practice of giving small elaborate bronze razors and tweezers (Fig. 4.2), usually interpreted as chiefly regalia, as grave goods continued the elite traditions from Early Bronze Age (Kristiansen 1998; Kristiansen and Larsson 2005; Skogstrand 2016; Thrane 2004).

In all probability, a warrior aristocracy was established in parts of northern Europe during Early Bronze Age and consolidated in Late Bronze Age. Warriors and warrior ideology were important elements in the constitution of the social elite (Carman and Harding 1999; Harding 2007; Hårde 2006; Jensen 2006; Kristiansen 1998; Kristiansen 2002; Kristiansen and Larsson 2005; Molloy 2011; Nordbladh 1989; Osgood 1998; Osgood *et al.* 2000; Treherne 1995; Vandkilde 2006b). However, while the swords signified the elite men in the Early Bronze Age, the toilet equipment was chosen as their most prominent symbol in Late Bronze Age.

Razors and tweezers were almost exclusively deposited in burials of individuals osteologically estimated as males. One-third of the analysed Late Bronze Age male burials in Funen contain razors, and sometimes tweezers. This group of males was also distinguished by being buried in considerably larger mounds than other men, on average 21 m ($n = 10$) in extension versus an average size of 13 m ($n = 8$) for mounds of male burials without razors. In addition, male burials with razors on average contain 2.9 ($n = 13$) artefacts, while male burials without razors contain 0.6 artefacts ($n = 33$). The extraordinarily rich burial from Lusehøj with more than 20 artefacts is excluded from this calculation (Thrane 2004, 79–80). In other words, males buried with razors were given nearly five times as many artefacts as males buried without razors (for the whole picture, including corresponding results for female burials see Skogstrand 2016). The questions are why did these artefacts get such a prominent position in the symbolic language of the elite, and were razors associated with notions of masculinity? And concerning the topic of the article, how on earth is a razor related to violence?



Figure 4.2. Bronze razor and tweezers with gold inlay (B1515), Late Bronze Age, per.V, from a mound in Løve, Holbæk, Denmark. (© The National Museum of Denmark)

To approach these questions, it might be useful to consider the history and original context of the razors and tweezers. Toilet equipment is introduced in the burials in Denmark in the Early Bronze Age, together with the bronze sword (Boye 1896; Glob 1974; Jensen 1998; Jensen 2002). Swords are “...more than fossils of war in itself, as they are also products of the social mechanisms that afforded violence a cultural value.” (Molloy 2010, 403). The sword is a specialist weapon and its introduction in Early Bronze Age may reflect a restriction in who were permitted to undertake legitimate violence on behalf of community (Molloy 2010, 424). To fight efficiently with a double-edged sword requires highly skilled technique. You have to attack correctly to take advantage of a bronze sword but also to avoid damaging your own weapon. Just as important, you need to be able to defend yourself against the numerous possibilities a double edged sword gives for striking and slicing an opponent, and to become a capable sword fighter takes many years of training and exercise (Peatfield 2008).

Studies of Early Bronze Age swords from Denmark (Kristiansen 1984) and Late Bronze Age swords from Ireland and Britain (see also Horn 2013; Molloy 2006) have revealed recurrent sharpening and damage to the blades, indicating that they were used for repeated fighting. Experiments with replicas have demonstrated that Late

Bronze Age swords are highly functional, versatile and efficient weapons. Numerous discoveries of human remains from the Bronze Age with traces of violent deaths show that assaults with fatal outcomes occurred, and occasionally on a large scale (e.g. Hårde 2006; Jantzen *et al.* 2011; Louwe Kooijmans 1993; Osgood 1998, 19–21; Vandkilde 2006a, see also Molloy 2007). The findings in Tollense valley in northeastern Germany especially suggest that extensive battles occurred, but the identified injuries on human remains are caused by arrows and striking weapons like clubs, not swords (Jantzen *et al.* 2011). Also at Sund in Trøndelag in Middle Norway, several buried individuals dated to the Early Bronze age show signs of traumas. Some of them originate from blades, possibly bronze swords, while others are caused by blunt weapons (Fyllingen 2002; Fyllingen 2003). However, so far, no fortified settlements dated to the Bronze Age have been found in Denmark (or Norway), unlike in contemporary central Europe or in Early Iron Age Scandinavia (Jensen 2002).

These various evidences and apparent paradoxes may suggest that the Bronze Age societies in this area were not characterised by systematic warfare or group combats that required investments in defensive architecture (Osgood 1998, 81). Sporadic violent assaults occurred, probably mainly skirmishing and raiding to obtain surplus towards members of neighbouring areas, but bronze swords were not the main weapon in such attacks. Rather the swords may primarily have been reserved for certain people and for certain types of fight.

Several researchers (e.g. Harding 2007; Kristiansen 1998; Kristiansen 2002; Kristiansen and Larsson 2005; Levy 1982; Molloy 2007b; Nordbladh 1989; Osgood 1998; Rowlands 1980) have argued that Bronze Age warfare was a highly ritualised phenomenon where ceremonial practices were conducted as a part of warfare itself and with strict rules for personal single combats. Warfare may often have taken form as ritual games or sports where young men and warriors performed contests and games to demonstrate their abilities (Joyce 2000b, 264; Kristiansen and Larsson 2005, 229; Molloy 2010, 422). Ritual fights were crucial in the competition for rank, power, and honour between communities, households and individual warriors (Chagnon 1990; Kristiansen and Larsson 2005, 227; Osgood 1998; Rowlands 1980). That is not to say that ritual fights necessarily were staged and not for real. On the contrary, bloodshed and killings may have occurred frequently, sometimes causing the outbreak of more extensive warfare (see e.g. Chagnon 1968; Chagnon 1990; Goldschmidt 1989).

Conceivably, a loose system of martial arts developed during Late Bronze Age with its roots firmly located in the Early Bronze Age combat system (Molloy 2011, 79.). At the centre of this tradition were the preparations of warriors. Huge efforts were invested to fulfil specific ideals of bodily beauty by grooming the body through a long range of practices and especially to the most time-consuming preparation: to build and prepare the body to accomplish specific rules and techniques for fighting, physical health and fitness, entertainment, codex of honour as well as mental, physical, and spiritual development (see e.g. Mason 1992; Myrntinen 2008; Osborne 1998b; Wiegers 1998). By hours and years of training and exercise, boys and men of certain groups acquired specific bodily skills, practice and appearance. Accordingly, the aesthetic and beauty of the male body appears to have been central in life as well as death and was most likely constitutive for the individual's self-identity (Treherne 1995, 125) and thus in the construction of masculinity (Joyce 2000a, 7). The practice of removing hair gained such significance for men who possessed bronze razors that the razor became one of few items accompanying this group of men in death. In other words, the bronze razors in Late Bronze Age burials might symbolise the whole idea of Bronze Age martial art with all its practices and ideals and thereby important aspects of masculinity.

The ultimate display of masculinity, on which the reputation and rank of the whole community relied, was in all likelihood the performance of ritual fights arranged as ceremonial competitions between the most prominent warriors of different households or clans. Through ritual fighting, repeated rehearsal, and the grooming of the warrior's bodies, the bodily aesthetic of warfare and violence was expressed. Perhaps warriors who repeatedly conquered their rivals in ritual fights and exhibited excellent martial qualities as well as masculine beauty gained status as immortal and semi-divine heroes (see e.g. Kristiansen and Larsson 2005, 365–366). A glorification of violence and its association with masculinity may have been a consequence of such practices, which again possibly created a generally low threshold for the use of violence in other social contexts. Small personal conflicts and minor insults might have required an urgent and possibly violent response. Inability to respond properly to offenses or provocations could even have been associated with concepts of emasculation (Ekenstam 2006a; Ekenstam *et al.* 1998).

On the other hand, notions of the aesthetic of violence and strict rules for fighting probably produced norms regarding which forms of violence that were accepted in different situations and on those

allowed to practice it. Violence performed according to the standards of masculine physical beauty, with a bronze sword, correct movements, a shaved face and well trained body, may have been considered more appropriate than other kinds of violence (see e.g. Joyce 2000a; Munn 1977; Myrntinen 2008; Osborne 1998a; 1998b; Skogstrand 2016). Accordingly, to perform violence within the current standards of perfection and legitimacy would give the individual man recognition as masculine, while violence breaking with the accepted procedures could be regarded illegitimate and even punished.

Probably, also those men who were buried without toilet equipment and in generally smaller mounds or in flat graves (see Skogstrand 2016), went through a basic introduction to the martial arts and a minimum of weapon training. All young men, with the exception for possible slaves, may have participated in games, ritual fighting and ceremonies at a local level (see e.g. Joyce 2000b; Mason 1992). Hence, they had knowledge and skills of basic swordfight and probably other fighting techniques and could, if necessary, defend their settlements and occasionally attend either raiding or journeys. To accomplish the most appreciated forms of violence was, nevertheless, restricted to a small segment of the population: those who were able to handle a bronze sword and practice the art of beautiful violence. Thus, the quality in the performance of violence may have defined who was really considered a man.

Tribalization and increasing professionalisation: Warfare in the Roman period eastern Norway

During the Late Bronze Age, the bronze weapons disappeared from burials as well as hoards, and for the next centuries weapons are nearly absent, not only from the burials but from the entire archaeological record in Scandinavia, with a few exceptions like the Hjortspring hoard (Kaul 2003; Randsborg 1995). Around 200 BC, weapons were once again introduced as grave goods, and the number of weapon burials increased rapidly by the turn of the millennium. By the onset of the Roman period monumental mounds and richly equipped burials, with or without weapons, became more common (Hedeager 1990, 112; Skogstrand 2016).

The weapon burials from Roman period eastern Norway hold apparently functional fighting kits. The most frequent equipment is a single javelin and/or a spear, sometimes together with a shield. Swords are quite common and usually combined with spear, javelin, and shield: a full weapon set (Fig. 4.3, Bemman and Hahne 1995;

Hedeager 1990, 117; Stylegar 2008, 250–252). Burials with weapons show a great variety and may contain combs as well as bear claws, be deposited in a precious bronze vessel or just in a pit but generally they are not particularly richly furnished with objects. This variety suggests that the warrior role was not initially reserved for members of the elite but potentially available for all free men (Skogstrand 2016). To become a warrior may have been an opportunity for individuals to achieve status and position through attainments in battle or the obtainment of war booty, and might, thus, have been a chance to seek social mobility (Hedeager 2001, 104; Resi 1986, 48; Skre 1998, 259).

In contrast to the situation in Late Bronze Age Scandinavia, fortified settlements and defence systems like ramparts, moats with pointed stakes and sea barriers across shallow fjords dated to the Roman period have been excavated in several places in Denmark. They may display a more permanent need to protect single settlements against attacks compared to the situation in the Late Bronze Age but also increased ownership to land and requirements to hold and defend territories (Jensen 2006, 129–130, 585–590 see also Kristiansen 1998, 111–112, 310–311; Jørgensen 2003; Kaul 1997). The findings of more than 70 sacrificed combat victims at Alken Enge in Jutland, mainly young males and several with severe traumas (Holst 2013, Museum Skanderborg 2017, The excavations are finished but not yet published by 2016) and the extensive weapon depositions in bogs in Denmark (e.g. Carnap-Bornheim 2014; Engelhardt 1865; Engelhardt 1969; Engelhardt 1970; Ilkjær 1990; Ilkjær 2000; Ilkjær 2003; Jørgensen *et al.* 2003; Kaul 1988; Kaul 2003) show that substantial armed conflicts most likely occurred in Scandinavia in the Roman period.



Figure 4.3. Sword, javelin, spear, shield boss and shield handle in addition to three pottery vessels and resin from a bark or tree vessel, all from a Late Roman period inhumation burial at Bjørnstad in Østfold, C.55767 (Rødstrud 2007, 135). (Photo: Eirik Irgens Johnsen, © Museum of Cultural History, Oslo)

In eastern Norway, neither weapon hoards nor fortified settlements are known so far, but numerous hill forts have been registered. The hill forts are often strategically placed along roads and rivers, usually at hardly accessible localities with a good view. They were presumably easy to protect and probably had military functions as defence systems. Few have been excavated, but they are usually held to have been built and used mainly in the Late Roman period (200–400 AD) and Migration period (400–550 AD). Their existence suggests turbulent times with frequent armed conflicts and a need for defence against raiding warrior bands or repeated armed conflicts between regional groups (Finmark 2009; Hougen 1928; Mitlid 2003; Mitlid 2008; Solberg 2000, 103–107; Ystgaard 1998; Ystgaard 2003).

Heiko Steuer (2006) discusses how warrior bands and armies were formed in central and northern Europe from the La Tène period to the Viking Age and proposes a scheme of development of warrior band warfare among the Celtic and Germanic tribes under the influence of the Roman Empire. The presence of the Romans provoked warfare that led to a cyclical development of increasing tribalisation or ethnogenesis which again initiated more warfare. Steuer (2006) argues that, at first, warrior bands were levied from villages in order to protect them. Due to the necessity of organisation, tribes aroused from the clan-based societies possessing their own territories which could be expanded and had to be defended. Military units increasingly developed independence of the structures of clans and tribes and were constituted across ethnic affiliation. In order to keep such warrior bands together, the war lords had to ensure a steady income, which could be gained through warfare. This way the warriors became gradually more professionalised, no longer mainly fighting for their tribes but rather subordinated and employed by centralised authorities independent of family and clan (Hedeager 1990, 140; Jensen *et al.* 2003; Jørgensen *et al.* 2003). Such units were also recruited as mercenaries by armies from more complex organised societies. Mercenaries returned home with prestige goods they had received as pay but also with concepts, ideas and a familiarity of the military strategies of more advanced societies. Their knowledge contributed to the formation of independent warrior bands under the leadership of war lords who managed to gather entourages (Steuer 2006, 233). Followers would be loyal to a chief who behaved honourably and was

generous with food and booty (Steuer 2006, 233; Vandkilde 2006b, 397).

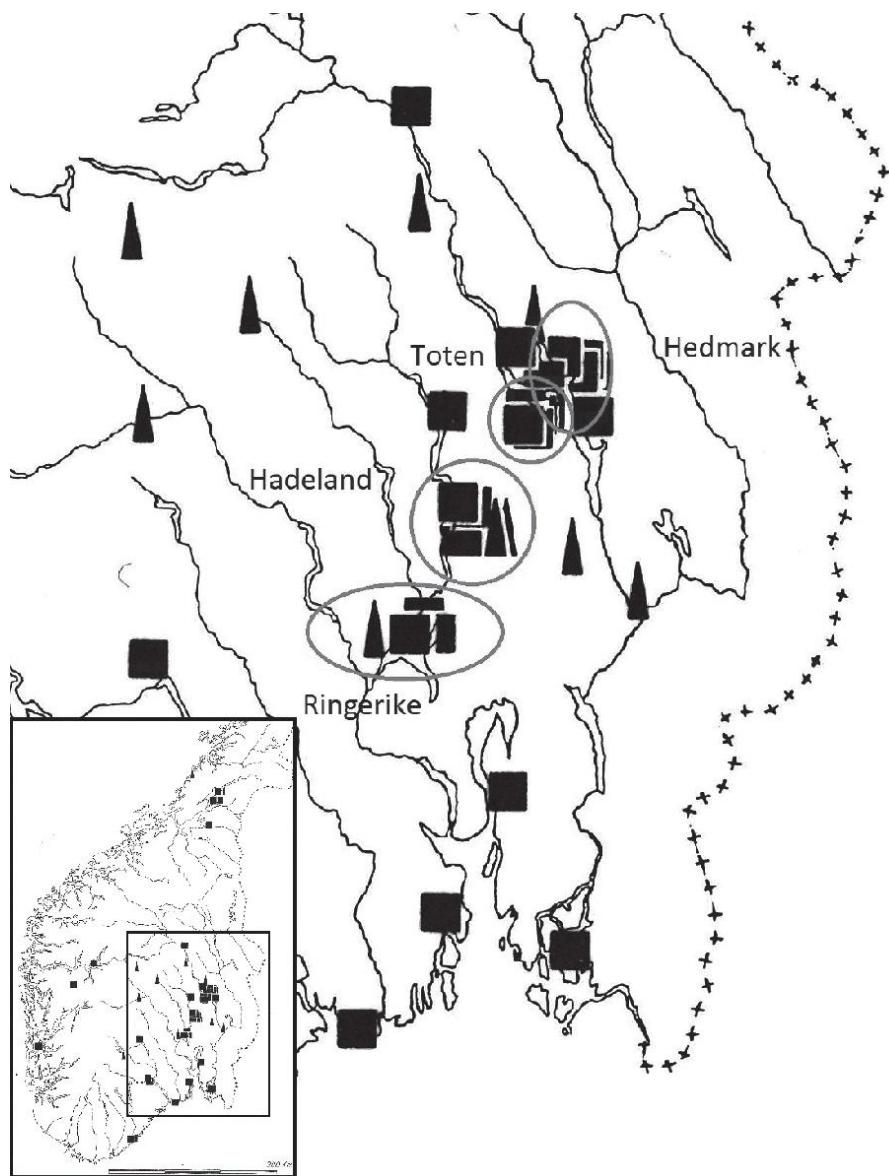


Figure 4.4. Distribution of 1. Single finds of weapons and 2. Weapon burials in eastern Norway in the second half of the Early Roman period, B2. Possible regions marked (after Bemman and Hahne 1995, 340, Abb 28).

Several studies (e.g. Ferguson and Whitehead 1999; Mattingly 1999; Strathern 1999) show how small-scale indigenous societies may react to expanding states with increased tribalization and

militarisation (also called tribal-zone theory), and they support Steuer's scheme of development. It should be remarked that modern ethnography document how small communities respond to a world system of colonial powers, capitalistic economy and superior military technology in addition to the transmit of new serious diseases (see Ferguson and Whitehead 1999). Nevertheless, some of the observed consequences and processes are in all probability also relevant in Roman period Scandinavia. The large extent of Roman import in eastern Norway (Eggers 1951; Hansen 1987; Resi 1986) confirm the ethnographic observation that influence from states reach far beyond the tribes in the immediate vicinity of the borders of the empire (Ferguson and Whitehead 1999). Also the increase in weapon burials (Bemman and Hahne 1995; Stylegar 2008) and the establishment of far reaching alliance networks in eastern Norway during the Roman period (Hansen 1987; Hansen 1995; Resi 1986; Storgaard 2003), may indicate extended effects of the Roman expansion on the continent in the tribal zone.

In the inland of eastern Norway, the frequency of weapon burials peak around 200 AD. In contrast, Østfold, which has the largest total number of excavated burials from the Roman period in eastern Norway, the number of weapon burials remains relatively low (Fig. 4.4, Skogstrand 2016). This divergence in the distribution of weapons probably reflects, among other things, varieties in the war systems between the inland area and Østfold and in the following they will be discussed separately.

Artefacts do not necessarily reflect the deceased person's actual status, role or position in life but may be the result of complicated relations, stories of life, cosmological beliefs, or funeral rituals (Brück 2004, 325; see e.g. Kaliff 1997, 98; Parker Pearson 1999, 84; Vandkilde 2006b, 394). There are however, several circumstances that indicate that the individuals buried with weapons in eastern Norway may have been warriors, or had a position or status related to warriorhood. First, as already said, the burials generally hold functional fighting kits, not symbolic replacements (see e.g. Härke 1990). Second, mainly young men are buried with weapons, not older men, something which might suggest that only those still able to fight were given weapon burials (see Skogstrand 2016, for a discussion of female weapon burials). Third, most weapon burials contain just weapons and are not particularly richly furnished, although this also occurs. Hence, the weapons did probably not mainly serve as symbols of power and position. Fourth, the general frequency of types and combinations of weapons found in burials in eastern Norway fit

surprisingly well into the three-level military hierarchy which Claus von Carnap-Bornheim and Jørgen Ilkjær (1996, 483; see also Jensen *et al.* 2003) identifies in the weapon hoard in Illerup Årdal (Bemman and Hahne 1995; see Skogstrand 2016, for further details and discussion; Solberg 2000, 103; Stylegar 2008, 250). The weapon burials of eastern Norway stem from a long period and a large area and do not at any point represent an army. Still, the relative occurrence of different types of weapons, and of bronze and silver mounted gears, corresponds to a known military organization of commanders, officers, and infantry. Consequently, it is likely that the weapons deposited in burials were owned and used by the buried person himself, exhibiting his current role and position in the warrior band. The weapons didn't just symbolise a social status but most likely also signified a capability to use them.

Violence as a test of manliness

The weapon burials in the inland areas of eastern Norway are not evenly distributed but concentrated in a few regions. They are mainly located along the eastern coast of the lake Mjøsa in Hedmark, in the Toten and Hadeland areas, and along the northern coasts of the lake Tyrifjorden at Ringerike (Fig. 4.4). This clustered pattern is related to large hill fort systems and suggests an establishment of tribal territories and turbulent times with changing coalitions and frequent armed conflicts, and a corresponding need to demonstrate power, wealth, and influence through numerous richly furnished burials in mounds (Hagen 1962; Hagen 1991; Skogstrand 2016; Solberg 2000). The repeated commemoration of warriors through burials indicates that their primary relationship was to the local community who built the monuments, not to some distant war lord (see Østigård and Goldhahn 2006). Following Steuer (2006), most warriors probably joined local or regional war lords plundering neighbouring territories, defending their own areas against corresponding attacks, and occasionally offering their services to other tribes, creating or upholding alliances (see also Stylegar 2008).

This picture might tally with Julius Caesar's descriptions of Germanic tribes in the last century BC. Caesar says that those who refused to follow their chiefs to war were reckoned as deserters and traitors (*The Gallic War*, VI, 22). This statement may suggest that particular groups of men were expected to become warriors regardless of their personal preferences and that warriors were not free to choose a war lord but had to defend and fight for their tribe, clan or chief.

Caesar's narratives, as well as the stories of the Roman orator and public official Publius Cornelius Tacitus', who I will consider below, must be read with great caution. Their texts are not scientific ethnographic works, not even first-hand observations, but formed and influenced by Roman literal traditions, moral considerations, and political motives (Width 1997). Still, the ancient texts may hold a core of truth or rather certain characteristics of reality. Roman soldiers, officers, craftsmen and traders were in frequent contact with Germanic people in general and warriors in particular along the Limes, and observed their equipment, customs, and rituals (Width 1997, 11–12). Accordingly, the descriptions of military routines, weapons and traditions concerning warriors are probably of the more trustworthy parts. As for analogies to more recent ethnographic records, the accounts of Tacitus and Caesar may serve as examples and illustrations of how certain aspects of the societies might have been. Further, Caesar and in particular Tacitus, refers to groups of people living in what today is northern Germany, and possibly southern Denmark, not eastern Norway. Still, great similarities in the archaeological record suggest close contacts between eastern Norway, Denmark and northern Germany all through the Roman period, and in the main common cultural traits, although with local adaptations and variations (Hedeager 1990; Jensen 2006; Solberg 2000).

Tacitus writes that:

“it is not customary for any person to assume arms till the state has approved his ability to use them. Then, in the midst of the assembly, either one of the chiefs, or the father, or a relation, equips the youth with a shield and javelin. These are to them the manly gown; this is the first honor conferred on youth: before this they are considered as part of a household; afterwards, of the state” (*Germania*, 13).

The account portrays a custom of public *rites de passage* from boyhood to manhood among Germanic tribes which implied young men proving themselves, their abilities to use weapons and surely their courage in battle situations. In the cited passage, Tacitus transfers Roman concepts of the state and household to Germanic clans or tribes. Nevertheless, he is referring to a type of ritual and ideas of masculinity found in numerous societies where manhood is perceived as something that must be won individually. The transition from boy to man is often marked by initiation rituals or even several stages of initiation which often imply passing specific harsh tests and proving abilities (Gennep 1999 [1908], 58–69; Goldstein 2004, 264; Hodgson

1999). In many pre-modern societies, the test of manhood is a challenge best met in war, and a man cannot be called a man, or marry, until he has proven himself in a battle. Those who fail are often humiliated and scorned, and some societies even employ death penalty for running off (Goldstein 2004, 253; see also Molloy and Grossman 2007).

The presence of weapons in the burials of relatively young males (Gebühr 1975; Hedeager 1990, 136) may reflect that young men were equipped with a shield and spear as a part of an initiation rite to mark that a youth had proven himself worthy to be called a man and a warrior (see also Hanisch 2002). Later they could earn a sword only if they lived up to specific warrior ideals and requirements. Accordingly, participation in warfare may have been regarded necessary and even required especially for young men belonging to the elite to prove their masculinity and manhood (Goldstein 2004, 275; Mosse 1990, 26–27). A situation with repeated armed conflicts might even have been sustained by notions of masculinity which presupposed warfare for boys and young men to become adults.

By celebrating and paying tribute to young warriors, like burying dead warriors with their weapons in mounds, the whole community was complicit in constructing and reproducing a warrior masculinity (Connell 2005, 79–80). In addition, shame was most likely inflicted by the community upon individuals who failed. Tacitus claims that:

“The greatest disgrace that can befall them is to have abandoned their shields. A person branded with this ignominy is not permitted to join in their religious rites, or enter their assemblies; so that many, after escaping from battle, have put an end to their infamy by the halter” (*Germania*, 6).

Again, Tacitus’ writings illustrate norms and sanctions well known from the ethnographic record (Goldschmidt 1989, 19; Goldstein 2004; Hodgson 1999; Molloy and Grossman 2007). Joshua Goldstein (2004, 274–275) argues that what keeps men in battle when things get tough is not so much a desire to be brave as to avoid the shame of being known as a coward and hence unmanly (see also Ekenstam 2006b; Mosse 1990, 26–27). A complex interplay between a long range of different elements, among them the urge to protect their mates, is involved in motivating warriors to keep fighting. Still, men’s fear of losing manhood, or being emasculated in societies where concepts of masculinity are strong, may be effectively applied to encourage or even force men to train, fight and endure battle situations. According to Tacitus, to run away from battle implied a shame that was

synonymous with being socially dead or an outcast in the Germanic societies. Such norms might be considered a logical consequence of the above discussed *rites de passage* rituals from boy to man. If the proof of manhood was given and symbolised by weapons, and you fled and left your shield on the battleground, you had virtually given up your manhood. Accordingly, you were not a man anymore and the community could react by excluding you from the adult male society.

The archaeological record exhibits a sharp distinction between male and female burials in the Early Roman period. Numerous types of items, especially different types of tools, are almost exclusively deposited with individuals estimated as females, while weapons and bear claws mainly occur in male burials (Skogstrand 2016). This might reflect that masculinity was constructed in opposition to femininity (and vice versa) and that certain tasks, positions, and categories considered feminine were taboo for men. The fear of behaving unmanly may thus have been an important structuring principle in society (see e.g. Bandlien 2005; Connell 2005; Ekenstam 2006b; Goldstein 2004; Kimmel 1996).

In a community where all free men are expected to prepare for warfare and where shame and taboos on unmanly behaviour may have pervaded the upbringing of boys and structured men's daily practice, we might expect a high frequency of violent acts. Differing from the Late Bronze Age, the warrior role was accessible and even required for a larger share of men, causing a generally raised level of fighting competence. In other words, the capability to use advanced violence increased, and probably the importance of violence as a masculine practice.

The professional warrior

As already said, the county of Østfold has by far the highest number of excavated burials from the Roman period in eastern Norway but only a handful contain weapons (Skogstrand 2016). Østfold lies at the outermost southeast of Norway, and as such in between the weapon burials in the inland area and the weapon hoards in Denmark. There is, thus, no reason to believe that Østfold was an isolated peaceful spot, undisturbed by neighbouring conflicts and raiding warrior bands.

On the contrary, the situation most likely resembled the image Lotte Hedeager (1990) outlines of how society was reorganised during the Roman period in Denmark. She points especially to the increased importance of territorial expansions and control and how this required

more permanent warrior bands or even standing armies, which professionalised the role of the warrior and cut the bonds of loyalty between warriors and the structures of clan or tribe. The warriors could be subordinated to centralised authorities like regional chiefs or offer their services as mercenaries to a higher order of state and warfare became a lifestyle from which a warrior or noble cast emerged (Hedeager 1990, 94–96; Steuer 2006, 229).

This development is partly reflected in the general standardisation and homogeneity of weapons found in the burials as well as the weapon hoards which shows that weapons were mass produced, probably on orders from regional chiefs who supplied and equipped their followers (Hedeager 1990, 140; Ilkjær 1990; Jensen *et al.* 2003; Steuer 2006; Stylegar 2008; Watt 2003, 188). Also the changes in the compositions of weapon sets from mainly consisting of javelins, spears and shields in the Hjortspring and Vimose 1, to increasingly being supplemented with double edged swords in the weapons hoards from the Late Roman period (Jensen 2003, 227; Kaul 2003, 216) strengthens the impression of a professionalization of the warrior. As said above, a sword is a lot more demanding to master properly than a spear and shield and, accordingly, requires considerably more training than most men could afford (Molloy and Grossman 2007; Peatfield 2008). In addition, to make an infantry work as intended with the accurate coordination of javelins, spears and shields is not achieved without a lot of rehearsal, which again requires time and leadership (Jensen *et al.* 2003, 325–326; see also Skre 1998, 259). Consequently, the access to warriorhood, presumably, became restricted, creating a professional warrior class of noble youths and excluding large groups of men. We may also expect that the economic aspects of warriorhood developed during the Roman period and that rewarding of warriors by booty, women, and slaves gained importance for motivating as well as recruiting warriors (Hedeager 1990, 95–96).

The professional character of warriorhood is most likely also demonstrated in the withdrawal of weapons from the burials in large areas in Late Roman period (Hedeager 1990; Jensen 2015; Watt 2003). As the weapons were supplied by the war lords, they were usually not considered personal possessions and, naturally, not deposited in the burials of most warriors (Henriksen 2009, 214). In addition, if the warriors fought independently of their clan or tribe, and operated as followers or even mercenaries under various chiefs, their primary relation was towards their war lord and fellow warriors, not their family. Accordingly, there was little reason for the local community to commemorate and bury them *as warriors* (Goldhahn

As the access to warriorhood, got restricted, large groups of men were excluded from the possibility to meet the standards of warrior masculinity. Ordinary young men were thus not expected or urged to become full time warriors, and emasculation, associated with failure as warrior was probably less permeating as a structuring masculine principle in Østfold than in the inland societies. Instead, ideals related to ordinary men's daily practice, taking care of food production and doing maintenance activities, most likely developed and created alternative and accepted ways of performing masculinity. Such a development may be supported by the introduction of tools in male burials in the Late Roman period. In Østfold, tools like knives, sickles, bill hooks and scissors almost exclusively occur in female burials in the Early Roman period. In the Late Roman period, such items are found equally often in non-elite male burials. A resembling pattern is identified in the burials at the cemetery at Møllegårdsmarken at Funen, where artefact types, among them tools, apparently move from female to male burials during the Roman period (Albrechtsen 1971; Skogstrand 2016).

The professionalisation of warriors and war bands in all likelihood made warfare more comprehensive and demanding, and more lethal. The development led to a monopolisation of the right to use legitimate violence but the warriors became an instrument for regional leaders rather than the power itself or an uppermost masculine ideal. As violence increased in severity, it may have lost some of its symbolic meaning and influence on the idea of masculine behaviour.

The cultural construction of masculine violence

The preceding examples and discussions show that warfare and warriors changed through time from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age and also varied between regions in Scandinavia. In the Late Bronze Age Funen, weapons were rare in burial contexts while toilet equipment became a key symbol in male burials located in large mounds. In the Roman period, weapon burials were frequent in the inland area of eastern Norway but rather rare in Østfold. Most weapon burials contained a javelin and/or a spear and a shield, but also full weapon sets with a double-edged sword, javelin, spear, and shield were common.

The changes and variations in the occurrence and composition of weapon burials are in all probability connected to changes and

diversities in war systems. As the character of warfare and the warrior role changed, so did the use and understanding of violence and its impact on the construction of masculinity. In the Late Bronze Age, the performance of violence was closely related to ritual fighting and to concepts of bodily beauty. Masculinity and masculine behaviour may thus have been associated with practices of violence within certain standards of aesthetic which only some men were able to fulfil. Elite men accomplishing the ideals of masculine beauty might thus have been considered more masculine than other men, something which again may have legitimated their elite power and position.

In the Roman period, a warrior role, not only an option for, but probably required of all free men, developed in the inland areas of eastern Norway. Concepts of emasculation induced men to prepare for war and all men were expected to contribute in the warrior band and follow their leader if he chose to raid neighbouring societies. Young men had to prove themselves worthy before they obtained their own weapons and thus personal motivation of acquiring status as a man by proving warrior skills was combined with the ambition of local chiefs to gather followers and secure or expand their territory. The combination of personal and external incentives to prepare for and participate in warfare, and the concurrence of individual and collective interests, made concepts of emasculation particularly effective and imperative elements in the warrior ideology. The experiences of extensive weapon training and fighting were common among most men, creating a shared repertoire of symbols and bodily memories (Hamilakis 2002, 129; Olsen 2010, 116), which in all likelihood were crucial in the construction of masculinity as well as the concepts of emasculation. Violent practices may thus have been essential in the performance of masculinity.

The warriors in Østfold increasingly fought for someone else's gain and status, motivated by material and external purposes like expanding territory and acquiring war booty, rather than inner motivation related to fulfilling masculine ideals and living out a warrior identity. Warfare turned into a means to achieve other ambitions rather than a goal in itself and, accordingly, the actual results of warfare became more prominent than practice and preparation in warrior ideology. As the use of violence gradually became more of an instrument, its symbolic role may have lost importance in the construction of masculinity, at least for most men who were excluded from warriorhood as profession.

It should be stressed that the development and character of the

warrior was neither one-dimensional nor uniform and that the preceding discussion of warrior types has focused on the contrasts between different war systems and warrior roles rather than their similarities and dynamics. In most societies, in the inland as well as in Østfold, the war systems were in all likelihood fluctuating, from warriors mainly fighting to defend their homestead and clan, to settings where warriors were mainly recruited from the elite and became mercenaries travelling long distances to be employed for years by regional war lords in multi-ethnic warrior bands (Steuer 2006, 229). Through these dynamic and shifting circumstances, the meaning of violence and its impact on the construction of masculinity varied.

Some basic structures still differed regionally and chronologically and created different premises for the performance and conceptions of violence. While the Late Bronze Age warrior probably often knew his opponent, fighting for his individual honour and displaying his masculinity through artificial fighting and beauty of violence, violence and warfare became less personal during the Roman period and increasingly pursuing the political ambitions of regional war lords. When violence is a part of a performance, either a ritual fight or a *rite de passage* (or both) its symbolic meaning is more prominent than when violence is executed mainly as a means to survive a battle and for someone else's gain. Accordingly, violence may have been far more essential to the construction and understanding of masculinity in the Late Bronze Age and in the inland regions of eastern Norway in the Roman period than in Østfold and Denmark despite the increased severity of the violence executed by professional warriors.

Conclusion

Warfare implies interpersonal violence and horrible experiences for warriors attending battles and for those attacked, and to prepare for war and participate in combat have great human costs (Molloy and Grossman 2007). Through the preceding discussions, the war systems, technical abilities and motivation of warriors overshadows the individual bodily experience of exhausting training, hunger and cold, of being wounded and scared, and the ecstasy of survival and victory. The first-hand knowledge of violence, as performer as well as victim, most certainly created common references for masculinity and gave individual meaning to the concept of emasculation through the specific challenges that had to be overcome to acquire and maintain status as a man (Goldstein 2004; Skogstrand 2016). However, we may be in danger of continuing the prehistoric heroisation of fearless

warriors. We forget their victims and how the experiences warfare may have traumatized the warriors themselves for the rest of their lives no matter how masculine they were considered to be.

The different cases presented above show that the war systems and the warrior role, its accessibility, equipment and fighting techniques, function and status in society, changed considerably throughout the investigated period. Accordingly, the practice of legitimate violence, roughly said, went from a ritual performance of lethal beauty, to a masculine practice of highly skilled fighting competence and into a mere means to achieve political aims. Its impact on notions of masculinity was probably related to its symbolic significance in society and the extent of violent practices among most men.

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Chapter 5

“Her striking but cold beauty”: Gender and violence in depictions of Queen Nefertiti smiting the enemies

Uroš Matic

Introduction

This chapter examines the “exceptionality” of Queen Nefertiti in smiting of the enemy scenes through close reading and the deconstruction of the previous interpretations and through comparison with other depictions of Egyptian queens in violent actions. The first argument of this chapter is that the depictions of Nefertiti smiting enemies were so far used in constructing an *orientalist* discourse of feminine beauty and *queenship* inevitably coupled with cruelty and violence. Through the *orientalist* discourse emerged an image of an *eastern* beautiful but bloodthirsty queen. The second argument of this chapter is that this *orientalist* discourse impeded the authors to contextualise these depictions. Therefore, it is often argued that she had a more dominant role than usual, being equal to the king or even herself assuming the role of the king. The third and the final argument of this chapter is that the interpretation of Queen Nefertiti smiting enemies cannot be accounted for without contextualisation and gender perspective. The arguments of historicity behind these depictions, although prevalent in both academic and popular reconstructions are not grounded in available evidence. Queen Nefertiti is depicted smiting and/or trampling enemies on the *talatat* blocks from Hermopolis, Luxor and Abydos. The *talatat* blocks are

stone blocks of standardized size (c. 52 × 26 × 24 cm) used during the reign of king Akhenaten (1352–1336 BC) in the building of Aten temples at Karnak and Amarna. None of these blocks on which we find Nefertiti comes from a known archaeological context however we can be quite sure that they were part of the compositions decorating temples during the reign of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Through proper contextualisation of these depictions in their compositional setting and through a gender perspective on how violent images are framed this chapter aims to analyse the legitimization of violence (Benjamin 1986, 279–280) in scenes in which Nefertiti smites the enemies. Through decorum oriented analyses (Baines 1990) of these depictions not only is it possible to explore how violence is framed (cf. Butler 2009); but it is also possible to explore more than just “subjective” violence and move beyond the tip of the iceberg of archaeological research on violence (Jensen and Matić, this volume; Žižek 2008).

The smiting of the enemy

The “smiting of the enemy” is one of the most enduring scenes in Egyptian imagery. The king of Egypt is depicted holding one or more enemies by their hair with his left hand and holding a weapon (mace, sickle sword, javelin or an axe) in a striking movement with his right hand. The scene is found in royal tombs, on temple walls (interior and exterior), and on both private and royal stelae, but it can also be found on rock carvings, palettes, ivory labels, stone markers, rings and scarabs, pectorals and weapons (Hall 1986; Schoske 1982). The earliest known such scene can be found in the Tomb 100 at Hierakonpolis dated to Naqada IIC (Wengrow 2006, 109), while the latest are the ones of the Roman emperors Domitian, Titus and Trajan depicted smiting enemies on temple walls. The smiting of the enemy scene is also appropriated in Meroitic imagery where we find *kandake* (title of queens and queen mothers) in these scenes (Hall 1986, 44). The Meroitic smiting of the enemy scenes are in fact the only ones in which women could be found depicted smiting the enemies in a monumental context (Bayer 2014, 271; Schoske 1982, 171). The only exceptions known (so far) are the depictions of Queen Nefertiti smiting the enemies.

The meaning and purpose of this iconic image in Ancient Egypt have been discussed by various scholars. Some pointed out to the fictional reuse of the scene related to “conservatism of expression without parallel elsewhere in the world” leading to a falsification in which every Egyptian king was represented as a conqueror (Gardiner

1961, 56–57). It was proposed that the role of the smiting of the enemy scene was not to commemorate but to perpetuate victory over one's foes, with the image not simply reflecting the reality but creating it through "sympathetic magic" and thus, when found in the temple contexts, serving as a protection for both the temple and the cosmos that it represented (Ritner 1993, 115–116; O'Connor 2003, 174). The smiting of the enemy scene is seen as prophylactic intending to prevent the potential rebellion (Meskell 2004, 121; Morenz 1998, 101). Recently this scene was studied as a visualisation of the cultural memory (Luiselli 2011, 10–25). However, there are also those who rather argue that the scenes are commemorations of real historical events, public ceremonial executions, and maybe even public holidays (Schulman 1988, 46; Schulman 1994, 264–267). This interpretation was much criticised and dismissed with strong arguments (Devauchelle 1994, 38–60; Müller-Wollermann 1988, 70–76).

The general view of the meaning and purpose of the smiting of the enemy scene in Egyptian imagery oscillates between the two standpoints, both extreme in their interpretations. These polarized standpoints even led to some indeed over simplified personal views of "the Egyptian national character" seen as not particularly violent in comparison to the Assyrian (Ward 1992, 153). The first standpoint understands the smiting of the enemy scene as completely devoid of any historical reference. This ignores that there were occasional real and public violent acts. The second standpoint treats all Egyptian smiting scenes as depictions of real historical events. This creates a rather bloody image of the ancient society which practiced human sacrifice and violent carnal rituals (Muhlestein 2011). This same standpoint has led to claims about archaeological evidence for smiting: two pits cutting into the late Second Intermediate period palace wall at Tell el-Dab'a were interpreted as archaeological records of such violent ceremonies. The smaller pit contained three skulls and nine fingers belonging to three hands; the larger pit contained two male bodies in an unusual position (one over the other, as if they were thrown) with one missing its head, as well as broken pottery and limestone chips. These pits were interpreted as execration rituals in which Nubians were sacrificed, and were directly connected to Ahmose's retaking of Avaris (Tell el-Dab'a) and related celebratory ceremonies (Fuscaldo 2003; Fuscaldo 2010, 23–29). However, the interpretation of these bodies as "Nubian" is based on certain out of date anthropological premises and erroneous associations with different Tell el-Dab'a contexts and is indeed very problematic (cf. Matic 2014). Nevertheless, although the interpretation of Perla

Fuscaldo should be taken with great precaution it served as archaeological evidence for those suggesting regular public ceremonial executions of enemies in Egypt (Janzen 2013, 314–316; Muhlestein 2011, 48). That some people died violent deaths does not necessarily indicate the ritual context of these deaths, neither does it *a priori* indicate the involvement of the king himself. We should avoid such “orientalist” approaches as they are often based on circular argumentation.

However, one has to find a middle ground here. Certainly, not every single depiction of a king in the smiting of the enemy scene was a depiction of a historical event or a commemoration of a bloody public ceremony. Tutankhamun never went to war, but he is well represented in battle scenes. There were also kings who waged wars and were quite active in them – some of them most certainly did smite enemies, which still does not indicate that the intention behind depicting them smiting the enemies referred to a specific event. The interpretation of the smiting of the enemy cannot oscillate between entirely fictional and entirely real, because while some pharaohs certainly did kill enemies, some clearly did not. It has to be interpreted as depicting a specific form of knowledge and reality, which can for the observers seem more real than the reality itself (cf. Münch 2013, 265–266). We have to be careful and bring into focus the context of each depiction we interpret, especially as iconic as the smiting of the enemy scene.

Often neglected and rarely discussed are the inherent masculine elements of the smiting of the enemy scene. The victory over male enemies is also the triumph of the Egyptian man (king) over the foreign, thus “other” men, realising the dominance and the masculine power of the king (O’Connor 2005, 439–454). We indeed never find an Egyptian king smiting female enemies or indeed hurting them in any way. There was clearly an active delimitation of the representations and of the set of contents and perspectives that are never shown maybe even being impermissible to show (cf. Butler 2009, 73). This can be explained by the concept of decorum as “a set of rules and practices, defining what may be represented, pictorially with captions, displayed and possibly written down, in which context and in what form ... and was probably based ultimately on rules and practices of conduct and etiquette, of spatial separation and religious avoidance” (Baines 1990, 20). War and violence are indeed mediated through frames which seek to contain, convey and determine what is seen. The frames of war function not only as boundaries but structure the images themselves, and through these frames of war other social

norms can be also structured (cf. Butler 2009). That is why it is important to critically examine the manner in which violence is framed, mediated and regulated through representations (Jensen, this volume; Matthews and Goodman 2013, 1, Moraw, this volume). Given that this chapter will analyse how gender as a social norm can be framed by violence, and the other way around, how violence can be framed by gender, what calls for attention is an already mentioned exception from the available corpus of the smiting of the enemy depictions. This is Queen Nefertiti smiting her enemies, and the main question of this chapter is the place of these depictions in the Egyptian decorum.

The case of Nefertiti shows us how easily images can be misleading if not carefully analysed and contextualised. Therefore, this chapter will first discuss the previous interpretations of the queen in the smiting scenes emphasising their inherent “orientalism”. Regarding the issue of the “real” behind the queen smiting the enemies this chapter will show how the historicity of these scenes can be dismissed through concentrating not only on the gender of the one who smites but also on the gender of the ones being smitten. Finally, it will be argued how Egyptian decorum legitimises violence as a cosmological necessity and how gender norms are also established through violent imagery.

“Her striking but cold beauty”

There are two (possibly three) known examples in which queen Nefertiti is represented smiting enemies. First example which will be discussed here are the two adjacent limestone *talatat* blocks originally from Hermopolis and now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (Fig. 5.1).

They are part of a larger composition of the procession of the royal barques on the Nile already reconstructed in the drawing done by Suzanne Chapman. The scene is oriented towards right and according to the reconstruction depicts at least three royal barques. The upper register depicts two royal barques with the one on the right with Nefertiti in the smiting scene. The queen is depicted in the kiosk decorated with uraei with sun disks on their heads on the left (rear) part of her royal barque. She is wearing her well-known flat-topped crown, and her left hand is holding the hair of an enemy while her right raises a sickle sword high in the air in a familiar pose. The middle of the cornice of the kiosk with uraei has the Aten depicted shining rays onto the smiting queen. Behind the queen’s barque one

can recognize the frontal part of another barque with the lower part of another smiting scene in a kiosk. Here however only the lower part of the smiting figure and the figure of the enemy are preserved. The figure in this barque can also safely be identified as Nefertiti. According to the available reconstruction there is at least one more barque depicted in the lower second preserved register of the composition. Here we can also see a kiosk with uraei and the Aten shining rays onto King Akhenaten, who holds the enemy for the hair with his left hand and with his right hand a sickle sword raised high in the air in the same smiting pose (Cooney 1965, Fig. 51α).

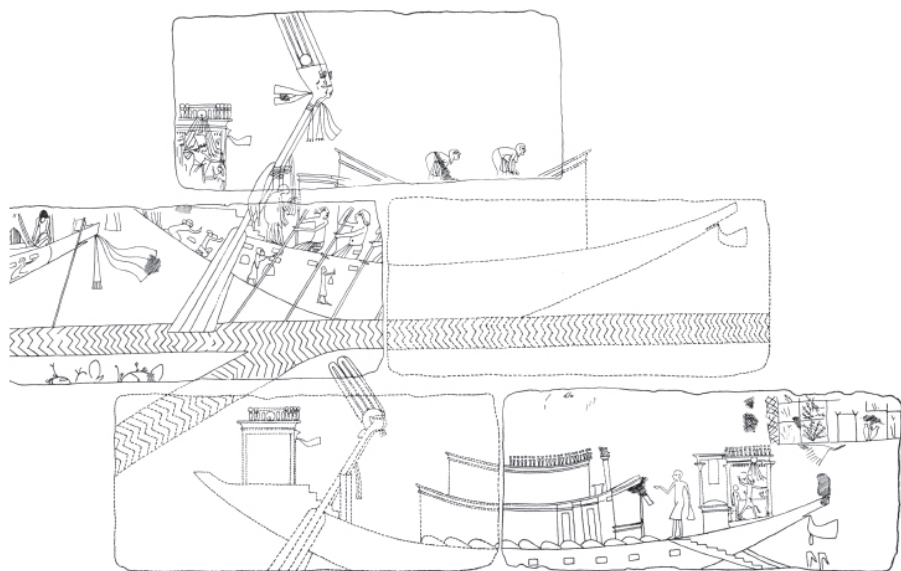


Figure 5.1. Hermopolis talatat blocks, drawing and reconstruction of the processions of the royal barques (after Cooney 1965, Fig. 51α).

The other known example where Nefertiti is depicted smiting enemies is a *talatat* block from Luxor (Fig. 5.2). Here, one can recognise four preserved kiosks with uraei bearing sun disks on their heads. Each of the kiosks has the Aten discs shining rays on Queen Nefertiti in her different forms, killing an enemy. The first kiosk from the left depicts Nefertiti wearing her flat-topped crown (Tawfik 1975, 85). She is holding the enemy by the hair with her left hand, and a sickle sword raised high in the air with her right hand. The second kiosk from the left depicts Nefertiti in the form of a sphinx with the head of the queen wearing the crown surmounted by the sun disk and plumes. She is trampling the back of the enemy with her right paw and the head of the enemy with her left. The third kiosk from the left

depicts Neferiti wearing the crown surmounted by the sun disk and plumes, and holding the enemy by the hair with her left hand and a sickle sword raised high in the air with her right hand. The fourth kiosk is damaged almost beyond reading, but one can recognise the back of the sphinx (part of the back and the back left thigh), which allows us to suppose that here also the queen was trampling the enemy in the form of a sphinx (Tawfik 1975, 163, Fig. 1).

The last *talatat* block which will be included in the corpus of Nefertiti in the smiting of the enemy scene is the one from Abydos (Fig. 5.3). Here we also see a kiosk on the right side of the barque oriented towards the right. However only the lower part of the kiosk is preserved and allows us to recognise a lower part of the figure in smiting pose, and behind it two standing figures with their hands down, wearing long dresses that touch the ground. It was suggested that the smiting figure is wearing a long skirt, and indirectly that it can be identified as Nefertiti (Hall 1986, 25). The skirt of the smiting figure is actually not touching the ground and is apparently transparent, as the left leg is depicted entirely visible. However, that the dress is not touching the ground does not exclude that it is indeed Nefertiti depicted here (Cooney 1965, 85). If one compares the Abydos *talatat* block with the Hermopolis and Luxor *talatat* blocks it is clear that the smiting figure is Nefertiti and that the dress is not touching the ground because the body is in smiting motion, and the dress rises with the arm being raised.

The *talatat* blocks from Hermopolis and Luxor depicting Nefertiti smiting the enemies attracted attention of various scholars so far. What is very interesting is the way these depictions were described and interpreted. Thus, we find the description saying that:

“the famous and *beautiful* Nefertiti is shown in that traditional pose of Egyptian kings, the vanquisher of foreign enemies of Egypt ... If we are to take this scene at its face value Nefertiti must have been a *forceful* and *energetic* woman who *held power at least equal* to her husband's. *Her striking but cold beauty* and her apparent *meddling* in affairs of state are curiously reminiscent of the *similar beauty* and *political interference* of the last Czarina of Russia” (Cooney 1965, 84; emphasis by U. M.).

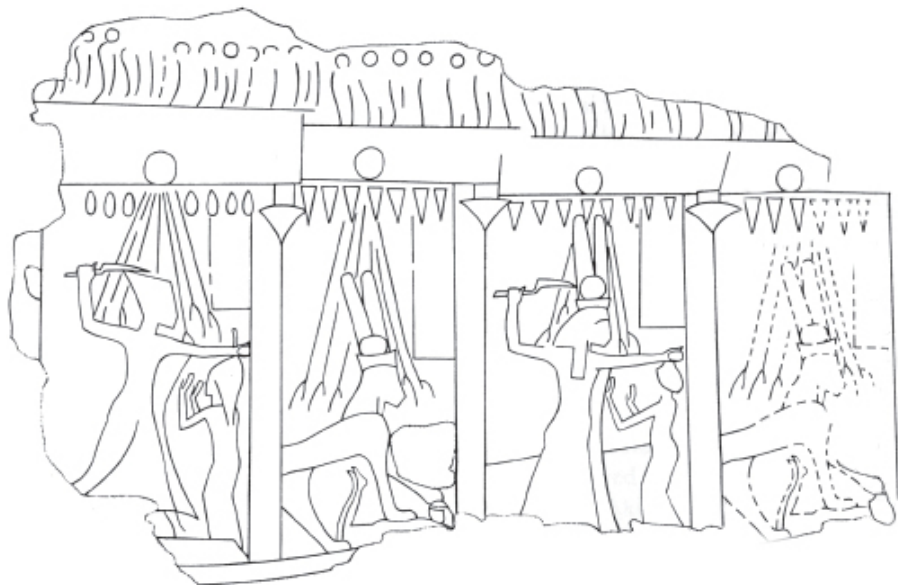


Figure 5.2. Luxor talatat block with the reconstruction of the fourth kiosk by Uroš Matić, drawing (after Tawfik 1975, 163).

Not only is her beauty here described as striking and cold but also directly compared to the Alexandra Feodorovna (Alix of Hesse and by Rhine) (1872–1918) the wife of Nicholas II Alexandrovich Romanov, the last Emperor of the Russian Empire. The “western” discourse blended what is beautiful with what is good (Eco 2004, 8), but this discourse in the same way contrasted the beauty of the “oriental” Other as cold and, indeed, dangerous. This comparison is interesting for many reasons, as John D. Cooney is clearly intimating that what inseparably connects the two are their beauty and political roles. One has to note the “orientalist” background of such a comparison (Said 1977). Written by an American author sometime after the Cuban Missile Crisis and during the Cold War, one wonders why exactly Nefertiti (Queen of the Egyptian Empire) is compared with Alexandra Feodorovna (Empress of Russia). The Soviet Union was giving major financial aid to the Egyptian socialist regime at that time and Egypt played a central role in setting up the movement of non-aligned nations as an alternative to the Soviet Union and NATO in 1955. The Suez crisis in 1956 put the country on the map as a place of geopolitical importance. The Soviet Union was the “Other” of the USA.

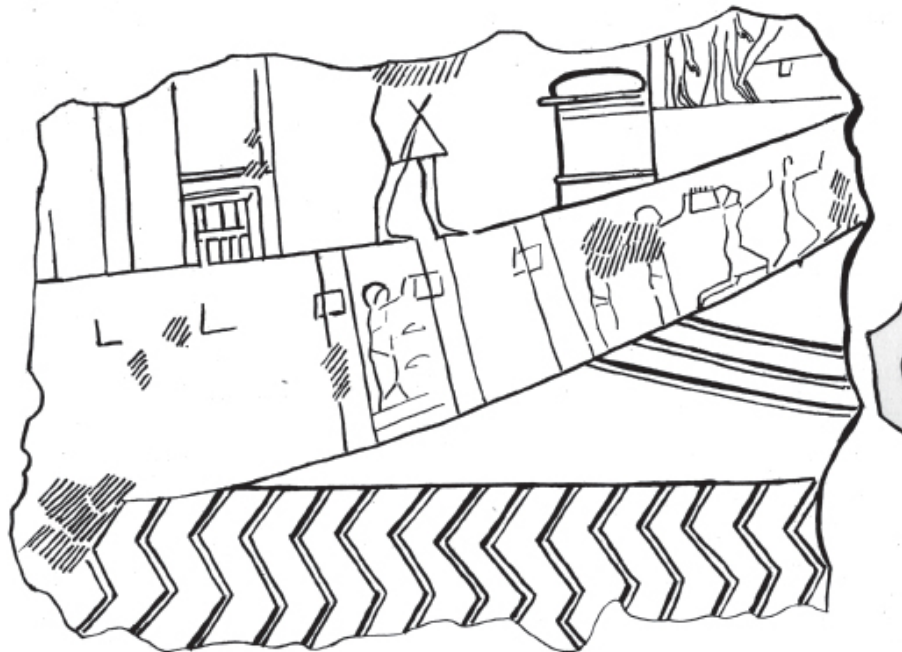


Figure 5.3. Abydos talatat block, drawing (after Petrie 1903, Pl. XXXIX).

There are also those who interpreted the scenes as evidence of her unprecedented power:

“Such scenes of *power and terror* on the cabins of boats or on kiosks are elsewhere restricted to kings or gods. She thus showed her *independent power*” (Wilson 1973, 239; emphasis by U. M.)

“Nefertiti’s unprecedented participation in pharaonic activities even enabled her to adopt the same *bellicose attributes and poses as her husband*” (Darnell and Manassa 2007, 34; emphasis by U. M.).

Some claim that: “the insinuation of Nefertiti into bellicose motifs such as head-smiting scenes seems clear enough in its general intent” (Redford 1984, 138), as if this intent is self-explanatory. Finally, the whole narrative on her power, actions and representations culminates with the following view:

“Nefertiti followed him [Akhenaten] faithfully and *was herself depicted in distortion*. A beautiful woman must have been devoted to the new movement to permit such a *perversion of her grace*” (Wilson 1973, 241; emphasis by U. M.).

An orientalist image of a female ruler was in this discourse recognised also in Cleopatra (Breger 2006, 282). Indeed, if something is stressed on Nefertiti, it is her beauty:

“It must be pointed out that Nefertiti seems to have been very proud of her beauty. She expressed her vanity and emphasized her femininity by all means in her attributes, in all her scenes, and even in both her names, the long and the short one, by adding a queen determinative at the end of both cartouches” (Tawfik 1975, 162).

Seductive beauty and feminine sexuality paired with cruelty and danger in the image of Nefertiti, and argued in existing scholarship, is both directly and indirectly present in the popular culture. The music video of Michael Jackson “Remember the Time” (1992, from the album *Dangerous*) starts with the iconic images of Ancient Egypt in popular culture and among them the bust of Nefertiti currently in Berlin. The setup is then moved to “Ancient Egypt” where “Pharaoh Ramesses” tries to amuse his bored queen, who is wearing the same crown as Nefertiti on the bust in Berlin. The queen is bored by every single court entertainer and sentences to death two of them before she is astounded by the main protagonist of the video, singer Michael Jackson. Thus, even here the beauty of Somali fashion model Iman Mohamed Abdulmajid, who interpreted the Egyptian queen (supposedly “Nefertiti”), is followed by danger and cruelty. The Michael Jackson video was mimicked by a Serbian turbo-folk singer Lepa Brena in her video for the song “You are my Sin” where the singer herself takes the role of a beautiful but dangerous and cruel queen. Nefertiti’s image in a violent context was repeated in a different manner through a depiction of her face inspired by the Berlin bust, but wearing a gas mask. The image of Nefertiti wearing a gas mask was used as a tribute to the women of the Egyptian revolution by the graffiti artist El Zeff in Cairo. The same image was used in protests of Amnesty International in Berlin against different forms of violence, including sexual violence in Egypt in August 2013.

That this image was not restricted to popular culture is demonstrated by its appearance in the Discovery Channel documentary titled “Nefertiti Revealed” (directed by Matthew Wortman and written by Shaun Trevisick, 2003) where in a reconstruction of the smiting scene, queen Nefertiti is smiting male enemies with a sickle sword. Nefertiti is depicted as giving a final death blow screaming and with her eyes in a bloodthirsty gaze. Blood

stains are depicted on the ground. The dead enemy, perhaps paradoxically, drops an Egyptian amulet out of his hand. The scene is followed by an explanation by the former Minister of Antiquities Zahi Hawass stating that she was depicted in a scene smiting an enemy, and that only kings can do this as it is the king's duty. The interpretations of the depictions of Nefertiti smiting enemies are not so different in the scholarly papers and in the popular culture and educational programmes. That the queen was actually ritually slaying enemies on a ship is argued even in the most recent scholarly works (Muhlestein 2011, 47; Tyldesley 2006, 132). Some were more cautious, stating that, "images of queens in this role are rare and the interpretation of these scenes is difficult" (Partridge 2002, 226) or that, "any interpretation of this unusual composition without further evidence about the overall context of this scene must remain tentative" (Graff 2008, 263). There were also suggestions that Nefertiti filled the position of the supreme ruler in smiting the enemies during the life and after the death of Akhenaten (Ertman 2007, 61). However, this is compromised by the very fact that King Akhenaten is part of the composition in which Nefertiti smites the enemies, and that he himself smites the enemies in this composition.

Gender of the smitten

It has been suggested that the depictions of Nefertiti smiting enemies were inspired by the earlier depictions of Queen Tiye trampling enemies (Aldred 1973, 135; Graves-Brown 2010, 153; Darnell and Manassa 2007, 34; Nims 1968, 546; Schoske 1982, 170; Tyldesley 2006, 132). It was also already pointed out that the enemies in both cases (trampled by Tiye and smitten by Nefertiti) are female (Aldred 1973, 135; Arnold 1996, 85; Cooney 1965, 85; Graves-Brown 2010, 156; Darnell and Manassa 2007, 34; Schoske 1982, 170; Tyldesley 2006, 132). However, the gender of the figure smiting the enemy in both cases seemed to provoke more attention in scholarship than the gender of the smitten enemies. The fact that the trampled and smitten enemies are in both cases female was not discussed much and scholars failed to realise its significance for the interpretation not only of the images of both queens in trampling/smiting poses, but of the entire compositions in which these depictions appear. Egyptology did adopt the method and theory of gender studies, but the work in this field was either concentrated on illuminating the evidence on women in the Egyptian past (Graves-Brown 2010; Spakowska 2012; Robins 1993b; Tyldesley 1994; Watterson 2012), or on discussing gender as only one

element in an identity palimpsest (Meskell 1999; Montserrat 1996). There are rare appropriations of gender as a valid category in iconographic studies (Robins 1994; Robins 2008; Sweeney 2004; Vasiljević 2007).

This chapter discusses gender in relation to the whole composition in which the trampling/smiting queens Tiye and Nefertiti appear. Through a gender perspective and a proper contextualisation of these depictions we can certainly formulate more evidence grounded interpretations.

Queen Tiye is depicted sitting behind her enthroned husband Amenhotep III in a kiosk in the tomb of Kheruef (TT 192) (Fig. 5.4) (Fakhry 1943, 469–472). Her golden throne has the ebony legs in the shape of the lion's legs and has richly decorated sides. We can also recognise a head of the crowned queen herself on the right of the visible side of the throne. The head can, together with the legs of the lion, be interpreted as the body of the sphinx. Right under the throne and between the legs of the throne one can recognise a $sm\bar{3}\ t\bar{3}.wy$ sign of “Union of the Two Lands” to which two female prisoners are bound, standing back to back. On the left is a female Nubian prisoner with short hair, nude torso with exposed breasts, and a long skirt. Her body is coloured dark red, she wears a necklace and her gown is decorated with strings of blue beads. She is bound with a lily, a symbol of Upper Egypt. On the right is a female Syrian prisoner depicted with long hair and long two folded gown. She has a yellow body and a blue-and-red gown, and is bound with papyrus, a symbol of Lower Egypt. The side of the throne on which the queen is sitting depicts a winged cobra on the left wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt and a Sn ring between the wings. The cobra emerges from a bouquet of lilies, a symbol of Upper Egypt. Just to the right is an inscription $ptpt\ h\bar{3}.s.(w)t\ nb.(w)t$ “trampling all the foreign lands”. Right of the inscription is a depiction of the queen in the form of a sphinx. The head of the sphinx is decorated with a crown and an uraeus (with horned disc on the head). The sphinx is trampling the legs and the head of the female Syrian figure with her back paws, and the stomach and the head of the female Nubian figure with her front paws. Right of the trampling queen in the sphinx form is an inscription $\dot{h}m.t-nsw\ wr.t\ mryt=f\ t\dot{y}\ \bar{m}h.t\bar{3}\ \dot{q}d.t\bar{3}\ rnpj.t\bar{3}\ r^f\ nb$ “great beloved King's Wife Tiye, may she live, be enduring and youthful every day”. The throne of Queen Tiye in the tomb of Kheruef is a feminised parallel of the throne of Amenhotep III in the tomb of Amenemhat Surer (TT 48). Here the throne itself has the form of a lion instead of a sphinx, and the $sm\bar{3}\ t\bar{3}.wy$ sign is depicted without

female prisoners bound to it. The side of the throne is, however, a direct iconographical analogy to the side of the throne of Queen Tiye. The difference is that the role of the cobra goddess is here played by goddess Maat, the sphinx has the head of the king with an uraeus and false beard and is therefore male. The king in the form of a sphinx (male in ancient Egypt) is trampling male Syrian and Nubian enemies (Säve-Söderbergh 1957, Pl. XXX).

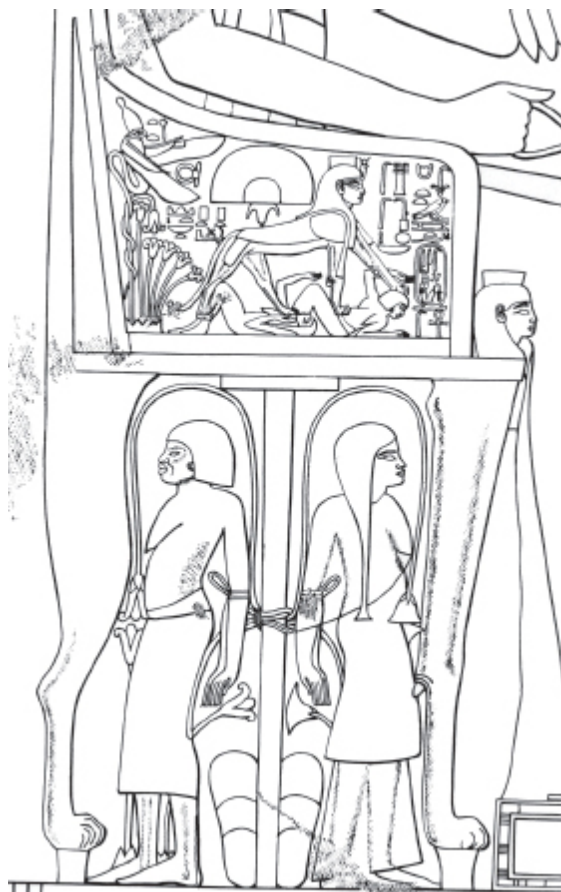


Figure 5.4. Queen Tiye trampling enemies in a sphinx form, drawing (after Nims et al. 1980, Pl. 47, 49).

Apparently, Queen Tiye depicted in a sphinx form on her throne dominates over the female representatives of the South and the North, thus metaphorically over the whole known world. However, such a depiction does not endanger the predominance of the king, as he is shown proportionally larger and indeed as the frontal figure to the right of the queen. The dominance of the man was, in the New Kingdom, possibly expressed sufficiently through his forward position

(Robins 1994, 35). He is seated in the throne wearing a blue crown, holding w³s sceptre in his left hand and a flagellum and an ⁵mh sign in his right hand.

One may wonder how is it possible that Queen Tiye is depicted trampling the northern and southern enemies of Egypt in the sphinx form, and indeed how is it possible that she is the one depicted sitting on a throne with a sm³ t³.wy sign and not the king in this scene. The answer must be looked for in the context of these depictions. The whole scene actually depicts the owner of the tomb presenting the royal pair with a decorated vase and four necklaces of gold (Nims *et al.* 1980, Pl. 47; Fakhry 1943, 473). The tomb owner was apparently indebted for his status, position and prestige to the queen which is shown by his titles and epithets, one of which is “the steward of the queen” (Larkin 1980, 78–80). Depicting the queen in a described manner was thus an expression of the status of the tomb owner directly related to and depending upon the queen (Bayer 2014, 271). The traditional motifs representing kingship, such as bound prisoners on the sm³ t³.wy sign and the sphinx trampling enemies, are feminised here. This was done not only to adjust to the gender of the figure of the queen but also to adjust to the general decorum and prevent the status misbalance in the status of the king and the queen.

Following these examples, the depictions of Neferiti in smiting the enemy scenes have to be interpreted not only through a gender perspective (the enemies she smites are indeed female), but through contextualisation and the compositional relation with Akhenaten smiting male enemies. Nefertiti is depicted smiting a female Syrian enemy in the kiosk of her barque on the Hermopolis *talatat* blocks. The same type of a female Syrian enemy is found smitten by Nefertiti on the Luxor *talatat* block. If we look at the reconstructed composition of the Hermopolis blocks, we notice that behind the barque of Nefertiti there is another one, which also depicts smiting scene in the kiosk. Here we can recognise a kneeling female Nubian prisoner being smitten by a damaged figure, from which we only have the lower part of the body preserved. It was suggested that the figure in this damaged kiosk must be Akhenaten because the figure wears the long pleated dress that does not touch the ground (Cooney 1965, 84–85). However, this interpretation is shaky, and not only because the gender of the smitten prisoner is female. There are known examples of queens in Amarna period depicted with their dress not touching the ground (Roeder 1969, Tf. 16, 406–VIIA). The argument that the figure’s dress does not touch the ground is erroneous, as the figure is in the smiting pose. This, according to well established iconographic rule, means that

the legs are stretched one from another and that the back foot is lifted in the air touching the ground only with toes. Additionally, the surface line on which the figure is standing is not depicted straight here. Thus, if the figure were to stand straight its dress would touch the ground. Exactly the same depiction of Nefertiti wearing a long dress that is not touching the ground can be found in the *talatat* from Luxor, where she is in the smiting pose. This allows us to conclude that the smiting figure in the damaged kiosk on Hermopolis composition is, in fact, Nefertiti, which is in accordance with the gender of the smitten enemy. Additionally, this allows us to reconstruct the upper register as having *two* royal barques belonging to the queen. She is smiting the female Syrian enemy on the barque to the right and behind it to the left she is smiting a female Nubian enemy. If the *talatat* block with Akhenaten smiting enemies does stand in the place suggested on the reconstruction, and if he is smiting a Syrian male enemy, we can suggest an additional possible barque on the left in which he is smiting a male Nubian enemy. The suggestion that the royal pair Akhenaten and Nefertiti are here adopting the role of war god Montu (Werner 1986, 121–122) cannot be justified. The reason is that Montu is not depicted smiting enemies standing on the ship, whether in the kiosk or not, but rather on the sides of the barques. Additionally, there is no female counterpart of Montu to which Nefertiti could have related, and whose role she could have taken.

Based on the previous discussion and known parallels, it is also possible to reconstruct the last kiosk of the *talatat* block from Luxor (Fig. 5.2). The queen is clearly smiting a female Syrian enemy in the first kiosk and trampling a female Syrian enemy in the second kiosk. She is smiting a female Nubian enemy in the third kiosk and is depicted as a sphinx in the fourth kiosk. Earl L. Ertman claims that the fourth kiosk is too damaged for its content to be accurately determined (Ertman 2007, 61). He did not pay close attention to the analogous examples and to the composition of the scene. The female enemies smitten on the Luxor *talatat* have analogies in the ones trampled by Tiye and smitten by Nefertiti on Hermopolis *talatat* blocks. The queen smites a female Syrian once in her human and once in her sphinx form. She also smites a female Nubian in her human form and is depicted as a sphinx in the fourth kiosk. The figure trampled by the sphinx in *this* kiosk must have been a female Nubian.

It was suggested before that these four kiosks belong to one barque (Tawfik 1975, 162), however they could have been juxtaposed as if “one next to the other”. Dirk Bröckelmann and Silke Roth argue that

there are actually four juxtaposed ships here depicted (Roth 2002, 27). Juxtaposed ships in the same manner can be found in the tomb of Kenamun (Davies and Faulkner 1947, 40) and in the barque procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall of Luxor (Dorman *et al.* 1994, Pl. 17, 68). This would make four barques in which Queen Nefertiti is smiting female enemies, with two times two depictions of the domination over the Syrian (North) and Nubian (South), once in a standing human form, and once in a sphinx form for each North and South. Close analogy can be found in the decoration of the kiosk of Amenhotep III on the left part of the right back wall of the first hall in the tomb of Amenemhat Surer. Here the king is depicted in six panels, three times in the form of a sphinx and three times in his human form. While the crowns he wears in his sphinx forms are the same in all three panels, the crowns he wears in his human form are alternating: Blue Crown, Red Crown and Atef crown (Säve-Söderbergh 1957, Pl. XXX). This additionally confirms the proposed reconstruction of the last kiosk on the Luxor *talatat* of Nefertiti.

Discussion

The depictions of Queen Nefertiti smiting enemies are often taken as evidence of her having at least the same status as the king. However, nothing in the fact that Queen Nefertiti is depicted smiting enemies suggests that she was equal to the king, nor that she is endangering his status as the more dominant figure. The smiting of a female enemy by a female figure is a parallel to the smiting of a male enemy by a male figure (Bayer 2014, 271; Roth 2002, 26); this does not indicate equal status, but rather points to the fact that there is a binary structural gender division in which the superiority is given to the male (cf. Robins 1994, 40). Additionally, the status of Nefertiti in these scenes is evidently different of Akhenaten's as she is depicted behind him in the scenes where he is smiting an enemy, as is the case with the position of Queen Tiye in smiting scenes. The king is never depicted behind the smiting queen. The scenes in which we find queens smiting are structured through decorum and ordered by gender, with the king having the more dominant and primary role. One of the rules of compositional hierarchy is that a husband should take precedence over his wife (Robins 1994, 33). Indeed, all of the depictions of Egyptian queens in violent acts, be that as attendants or actors (trampling or smiting), are restricted to "Bild im Bild" ("Picture in picture") scenes (Bayer 2014, 271). Therefore, the depictions of queens in violent acts cannot be studied separately from the whole

composition in which we find them.

After the Amarna period, royal barque processions show kings in their kiosks smiting male enemies. These include those of Rameses III and Herihor (Dorman *et al.* 1994, Pl. 28, 29, 68, 69, 71, 72, 76, 78, 80, 82, 83, 84; Wente *et al.* 1979, Pl. 19, 20). On the royal barque procession of Herihor, we also find a barque for a queen, albeit without the smiting scene (Wente *et al.* 1979, Pl. 22). This suggests that the binary gender division was preserved, but that the changes of religious ideology after the Amarna period affected changes in decorum and queen could no longer smite the enemies.

Why was Queen Nefertiti actually the only known Egyptian queen depicted smiting enemies? The earliest known inclusion of the queen in the smiting scene is found on a stela of Thutmose IV from Konosso, and under Amenhotep III the queen is depicted carrying out violent acts herself. There are, however, no known depictions of Queen Tiye smiting enemies. Christian Bayer suggested that Queen Tiye is not depicted smiting enemies because all such scenes are scenes of greater format or found in a monumental context – but no depictions in greater format or monumental context are known of Amenhotep III (Bayer 2014, 400). She is depicted as a sphinx in the tomb of Kheruef trampling female enemies and is depicted in the smiting scenes of Amenhotep III, but she herself is not attested smiting enemies. Given that one of the functions of the Egyptian imagery is to express religious ideas visually, the changes in representation could be explained with new religious ideas. This has already been noted in other features of Amarna representations (Robins 1993a, 36). Indeed, it has already suggested that the specific role of Queen Nefertiti in the theological conceptions of Amarna is the reason why is she depicted in smiting scenes (Schoske 1982, 171). The attestations of queens in “smiting of enemies” scenes are to be interpreted in relation to their ideological roles as female protective goddesses of the king. They are to be seen as corporeal forms of potentially aggressive goddesses such as Hathor and Maat (Bayer 2014, 400). Therefore, the ideas which were visually expressed already in the time of Thutmose IV and Amenhotep III were further developed in the coming Amarna period. The god Aten, Akhenaten and Nefertiti formed a triad in which the royal pair was identified as children of the Aten, but also as Shu, god of air, and Tefnut, goddess of moisture (Aldred 1968, 186; Assman 1972, 152–153; Assman 1991, 252; Baines 1985: 474–475; Fecht 1960, 105–107; Troy 1986, 136–137; van Dijk 2000, 269). Binary relationships in ancient Egyptian myth are not only expressed as complementary but also as correlative, where one figure is seen to

duplicate the other (Troy 1986, 11). This is why it can be said that it was the duty of the royal pair to smite enemies both male and female. This leads us to viewing the “smiting of the enemy” scene not only as “subjective” violence in which we can clearly determine the actor, but also to the “symbolic” form of “objective” violence. The “symbolic” violence imposes the “universe of meaning” and gender systems are one form of such violence (Žižek 2008, 1–2). The scene in which the king dominates the male and the queen the female enemies does not only structure the dominance of Egypt over her foes but also frames the dominance of male over female gender in the Egyptian decorum. If decorum indeed reflects the rules and practices of conduct (Baines 1990, 20), then it is also reflecting the rules of violent conduct or at least its gender frames (cf. Matić 2017, forthcoming).

Conclusion

The “orientalist” discourse in the background of the interpretations of Nefertiti smiting enemies, strong both in academic and popular culture, indeed influenced the scholars so much that they rarely examined these images in context. We do not find Queen Nefertiti smiting male enemies and her depictions of smiting female enemies have antecedent forms in Queen Tiye trampling female enemies. These depictions are feminised versions of the kings trampling or smiting. Depictions of Nefertiti in these violent acts have to be understood in the context of the composition in which they are found. The Hermopolis *talatat* blocks clearly show the presence of the barques of Akhenaten in which he is also smiting the enemies. The Luxor and Abydos *talatat* blocks were almost certainly part of similar compositions in which both the king and the queen smite or trample the male and female enemies of the North and the South, dominating the whole known world.

This points to the fact that there is not much reality and historicity behind Nefertiti smiting enemies as some scholars have previously argued. Rather these images served to show the domination over the North and the South, the whole world, over both men and women, to proclaim and evoke the totality of Egyptian domination. Gender plays a crucial role in the legitimisation of the violent images depicted, with boundaries of decorum and gender behaviour structuring the way an ultimate violent act such as smiting of the enemy is depicted. The violent act itself is, through different gender of the smiting figures and the figures being smitten, structuring the power relations between the genders, and at the same time establishing, proclaiming and repeating

the already existing social norms. Representations of royal gendered violent acts could have served as social technologies and institutionalised discourses with the representation being at the same time the construction of gender relations (Lauretis 1987, 2–5). The smiting scene structured like this not only gives legitimacy to violence against the foreign enemies but also legitimacy to gender relations in which the masculine has the dominant and prevailing role.

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Chapter 6

Les demoiselles d'Entremont: Violence, gender and headhunting in Iron Age Europe

Ian Armit

Introduction

“Remember that the first woman to have her statue erected in Rome was Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi; the great ladies of Entremont had this honour in their town before her” (Salviat 1993, 238).

Headhunting, as a form of ritualised violence, occurs frequently in the ethnographic literature, in communities widely dispersed both chronologically and geographically. We see it, for example, in North and South America, west Africa, southeast Asia, northern India, Australasia, and southeast Europe. Very often, it is associated with concepts of fertility and associated with the well-being of crops, animals and people. Naturally, this brings it into the realm of gender relations. This chapter develops certain themes first touched upon in my book, *Headhunting and the Body in Iron Age Europe* (Armit 2012), and the background to the arguments presented here are discussed in much more detail there. Much of the book was concerned with the ritualisation of violence and, specifically, with the historicity of headhunting and its centrality to Iron Age cosmologies and identities in Europe. In this chapter, I want to focus more specifically on the relationship between headhunting and the definition and performance of gender roles, both in prehistory and in a range of ethnographic contexts.

Ethnographic background

This connection between headhunting and fertility has been explored by a number of anthropologists. To take just one example, Derek Freeman (1979) working among the Iban of Sarawak in Borneo, discussed the cosmological basis of headhunting in the wake of its resurgence during World War II, when Iban warriors fought alongside British soldiers against the Japanese army. Although headhunting had been officially prohibited in Sarawak since the accession of the Brooke dynasty (the so-called “white rajahs”) in the mid-19th century, the ban had singularly failed to eradicate the practice (Runciman 1960), and even the Brookes themselves had, from time to time, permitted their warriors to take the heads of anti-government rebels. Carrying on this tradition, the collection of trophy skulls from the Japanese war-dead was widely tolerated as a means of encouraging Iban participation in the conflict (e.g. Harrison 2006; Heimann 1999, 203). Headhunting cosmology thus remained alive and well into the 1940s and beyond, when Freeman was collecting his data. And within this cosmology, the generative properties of headhunting were absolutely central. A few examples (all drawn from Freeman 1979) must suffice to give a flavour of this relationship:

1. Firstly, the Iban war-god Lang is described in one tale as splitting open a human head with his sword. The head releases seed from which subsequently emerges a human crop – emphasising not only the link between heads and crops but also the anthropomorphic qualities of the crop itself.
2. Secondly, the rice crop was believed to have a soul which shares its name (“semengat”) with the human soul, which resides in the head.
3. Thirdly, the human head was also associated with the phallus, both being seen as containers of seed.
4. Fourthly, elsewhere in Borneo, infertile women attempted to conceive by placing a human trophy head between their thighs.

The association between severed heads and fertility was, however, by no means limited to Borneo. Innumerable quotations can be presented from indigenous informants, stressing and retelling this cosmological connection. From the Konyak Nagas of Northern India, for example, we have the following statement:

“If we do not get a head every year, the crops will be bad, the pigs and cattle will not increase, our children will get ill ... We cannot say why this should be. It has always been like that”

Elsewhere we see material representations of the same relationship, as among the 19th century communities of East Sumba, where trophy heads were displayed as “fruit” on village skull trees (Hoskins 1996). An almost identical cosmological relationship was materialised through the *tzompantli*, which appears in various forms in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica. This was, in essence, a wooden rack used to display trophy heads, usually from enemy war-dead, sacrificial victims, or executed prisoners (e.g. Miller 2007, 168–173; Moser 1973). According to Spanish observers, the many *tzompantli* at the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan held from 60,000–136,000 skulls (Harner 1973; 1977, 122; Ortiz de Montellano 1983, 403), though excavated examples at smaller, regional centres might display a few hundred (e.g. González Rul 1963, 5). In Mesoamerican cosmology, the *tzompantli* was conceived as a tree, with heads as its fruit (Mendoza 2007, 403; Serafin and Peraza Lope 2007, 233). This conceptual association can be traced many centuries earlier: murals at the Maya-influenced site of Cacaxtla, for example, dating to around AD 600–900, depict maize plants with the ears of corn replaced by human heads (Robertson 1985; Stuart 1992, 134–136). Almost universally then, the collection, display and curation of human heads relates to cosmological ideas based around the fertility and reproduction of the community, its crops and its animals (Armit 2012, 69–119). This association clearly arose quite independently at many times and places in human history.

The association between heads and fertility places headhunting in a central position with regard to the definition and performance of gender roles. With rare exceptions (e.g. van der Kroef 1952, 229), active participation in headhunting raids has been an exclusively male preserve. Nonetheless, the subsequent processing and curation of heads have often been seen as female roles. The taking of a head, or at least participation in a successful headhunting raid, can be a central element in the assumption of adult male status, as was the case, for example, among the Asmat of New Guinea and the Iban of Sarawak (Freeman 1979, 238; Zegwaard 1959, 1040). In some societies, like the North Indian Nagas (Jacobs 1990) and the Ilongot of Luzon in the Philippines (Rosaldo 1980), special items of personal jewellery denoted this achievement. In certain cases, as among the Ecuadorian Shuar (e.g. Jandial *et al.* 2004; Rubenstein 2006; Steel 1999), rites associated with headhunting can be read as an appropriation of female productive power by male warriors; rendering female-

dominated agriculture subordinate to male-dominated warfare (Armit 2012, 59).

Headhunting and gender in the Iron Age of Mediterranean France

Evidence from Iron Age Europe suggests that similar concerns, relating the taking of heads to fertility, underlie prehistoric headhunting (Armit 2012). In Mediterranean France, in particular, a unique constellation of archaeological, literary, iconographic, and osteological evidence provides insights into the development of headhunting ideologies through time. That evidence forms the basis for extended analysis in my recent book (Armit 2012) and will not be rehearsed at any length here. However, I do want to focus on one specific, and rather neglected, element of this material – the association of female representations with evidence for headhunting.

The principal evidence for female representation comes from the site of Entremont, on the outskirts of the modern city of Aix-en-Provence (Arcelin 2006; Armit *et al.* 2012). This key site is generally regarded as being the political capital of the Saluvian confederacy who formed the dominant indigenous power during the 2nd century BC (Pralon 1998), when they terrorised the residents of the long-established Greek colony of Massalia (modern Marseille) and thus inadvertently precipitated the Roman military invasion that would lead to the permanent loss of autonomy for the region in the years around 120 BC.

Although the oppidum of Entremont was probably founded around 180 BC, when the walls of its “upper town” were constructed, the site itself had a much longer history. Evidence of a long-venerated hilltop enclosure survives in the form of copious sculptural fragments built into later ramparts and structures associated with the 2nd century BC town. These probably date back at least as far as the 5th century BC (Arcelin 2006), though the earliest examples are hard to date precisely. Clearly, however, there was a burst of creativity during the early to mid-3rd century BC, when a substantial number of near life-size statues were created, depicting the Saluvian elite or their ancestors (Armit 2012; Salviat 1993). This group of statuary can be dated quite accurately by the weaponry and personal jewellery depicted on the various figures (Arcelin and Rapin 2003; Rapin 2004), yet without exception the fragments have been recovered from contexts dateable to the late 2nd century BC. Thus, it appears that these objects, clearly highly significant and imbued with meaning,

were moved around, displayed and re-displayed, over more than a century, before being finally deliberately fragmented and incorporated within the make-up of a late road-way in front of the only public monument in the oppidum – the so-called hypostyle building (Armit 2012; Congès 2004). The hypostyle was also the focus for the display of real trophy heads, both male and female, secured to the façade of the building with iron spikes (Courtaud *et al.* 2010).

The arguments linking the earliest elements of the Entremont statuary to a concern with fertility have been rehearsed at length elsewhere (Armit 2010; 2011; 2012) and will not be repeated here. It is sufficient to mention perhaps the clearest indicator of this conceptual link in the form of the so-called *bloc aux épis*, or “block of ears (of wheat)” (Congès 2000; Armit 2012, 92–93). Here, on a single carved stone, we see an association between stacked, choreographed, trophy heads, and depictions of ears of wheat rendered to look similar to the disembodied, stylised heads. Whatever else the Early Iron Age sanctuary at Entremont represented, the link between headhunting and fertility was clearly in evidence (Armit 2006).

The statuary that most concerns us here, however, is a series of images, dating to the first half of the 3rd century BC. The best known is a series of at least nine or ten warrior statues, nearly life-size, and remarkably standardised in execution, size, style and pose (Armit 2012). The images represent seated, cross-legged warriors, with sheathed swords and with their hands laid on the severed heads of dead enemies (Salviat 1993) – up to six heads in at least one case (Fig. 6.1). Headhunting here, as with the earlier statues at Entremont and in the wider region, was clearly central to cosmology and belief. By this period, however, the symbolism of headhunting had been appropriated as part of the creation of new chiefly identities. Elite Saluvian males were represented and venerated not just as warriors, but as headhunters, emphasising their potency and perhaps their role as guarantors of fertility for the wider community (Armit 2012).

The warrior statues at Entremont have attracted a great deal of debate over many years (e.g. Arcelin 2004, 2006; Arcelin and Congès 2004; Arcelin and Rapin 2003; Armit 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012; Benoit 1955, 1957, 1965). Much less attention has been paid, however, to another group of statues from the site that appear to have been carved at the same time, displayed in the same locations, destroyed with the same ferocity, and deposited in the same contexts (Fig. 6.2). These statues depict elite women, also near life-size, and also seated, though this time on low seats, with their knees drawn up in front of them, rather than cross-legged like the male warrior statues (Salviat 1976).

The style of the carving and the rendering of facial features etc. makes it quite clear that they are associated with the male statues and were probably carved around the same time by the same workshop.



Figure 6.1. Composite reconstruction of one of the Entremont warrior statues (drawn by Libby Mulqueeny).

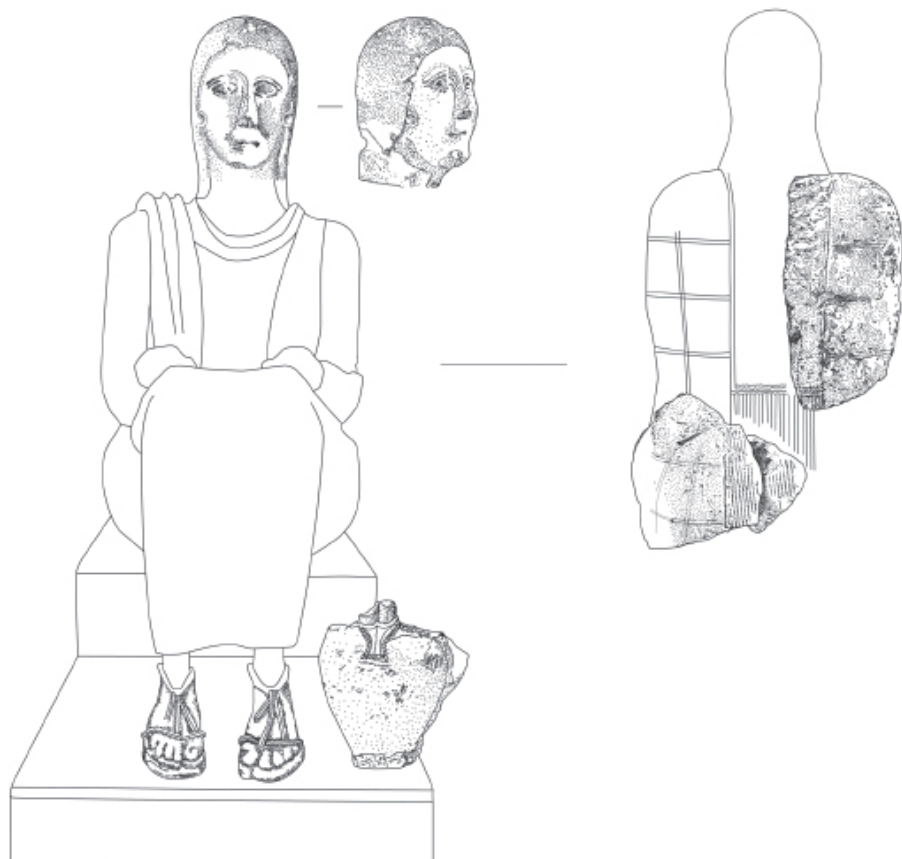


Figure 6.2. Composite reconstruction of one of the Entremont female statues (drawn by Rachael Kershaw).

At least three female statues were originally present, though there may have been many more, since the level of fragmentation makes it impossible to reassemble individual pieces. The women wear long, fringed veils and long dresses decorated with geometric, “grid” patterns, that probably represent richly-patterned textiles (they would originally have been brightly painted). In two cases the veil is lifted just high enough from the face to reveal elaborate ear rings, presumably markers of high status. The backs of the female statues are elaborately detailed, suggesting that they were displayed in the round, in contrast to the male statues, where only the back of the head was carved in detail (the remainder of the backs being only roughly worked). Carved, sandaled feet on plinths (Salviat 1993, 234) probably also derive from the female statues, while the male statues appear to have had no plinths and may have been set originally on wooden frameworks of some kind. Clearly the two sets of statues were

intended to be differently displayed.

Images of women are very rare, even in Southern France, where the greatest concentration of Iron Age stone statuary occurs. A stray fragment from the oppidum of Saint-Pierre de Martigues displays part of a fringed veil (Chausserie-Laprée 2005, 228), while a female head from Le Mont Garou, Sanary, also wears a veil and displays a large earring similar to those worn by the women at Entremont (Arcelin 2004, 79, fig. 10; Salviat 1976, 104). An eroded female head from La Courtine à Ollioules may also represent a contemporary local parallel. Each of these sites has also produced evidence for male warrior statues in the Entremont style, suggesting that the production and display of male and female statues in this period was thoroughly intertwined. A probable female statue found buried in a slab box below the *Tour Magne* at Nîmes is stylistically rather different and probably rather earlier in date (Py 1990, 819).

Arcelin and Congès (2010, 4) have suggested that the seated women at Entremont may have been placed as “adorants” around the heroised warrior, as if forming posthumous family groups reflecting the central figure’s status as husband and father as well as warrior. In general, therefore, and despite occasional suggestions of links to “Cartimandua, Boudicca and the ‘princess’ of Vix” (Salviat 1976, 104), the female statues have tended to be seen as essentially passive and subordinate to the males; effectively as parts or accoutrements of the male sculptures.

It is usually assumed that the female statues at Entremont did not hold severed heads, and that these were instead restricted to the male, warrior statues. Although there is actually no positive evidence that this was the case (since the female statues are so fragmented), the strong correlation between headhunting and male warrior status in the ethnographic record makes it a plausible interpretation. There is nothing to suggest, therefore, that woman had any active role in the practice of headhunting or the curation of heads. However, there is another group of carved objects that appear not to form part of the warrior statues, and may represent symbolic attributes of the Entremont women. These are carvings depicting bronze situlae, some 0.2–0.3m high, including one with a representation of a fine sieve across its opening, suggesting that it was used to strain wine. These situlae appear not to relate to the warrior statues and it is likely they instead represent a recurrent attribute of the female statues.

Discussion

The women depicted at Entremont are clearly of high social status, as is indicated by their fine clothes and jewellery, both of which recall the somewhat earlier female imagery of southeast Iberia, especially that dating to the first half of the 4th century BC. Here, sculptures such as the Dame d'Elche and Dame de Cabezo Lucero depict high status women in elaborate clothing, including veils, and with enormous ear ornaments (Aranegui Gascó 2004). One, the Dame de Baza, was found in the grave of woman of around 30 years of age, which also unusually contained a number of iron weapons (Chapa and Izquierdo 2010). These Iberian female figures were patently important in their own right and were not simply appendages to male statues. There is no reason to believe that the women of Entremont were any different in this respect and certainly no reason to see them as somehow less significant than the male warrior figures with which they were found.

If we are to consider the women of Entremont on their own terms, and not as peripheral to a male headhunting elite, then how should we interpret them? The male warriors have severed trophy heads as their most obvious accompanying symbol. By contrast, the female figures seem to have been shown with prestige metal vessels associated with the mixing, serving and drinking of wine. The consumption of imported wine was a central element in the performance of elite lifestyles in Iron Age Europe (e.g. Arnold 1999; Dietler 2005). It was also heavily ritualised, drawing on the symbolism of the Greek symposion, but with indigenous elements, as seen most vividly in the laying out of the princely Hallstatt D tomb at Hochdorf (Biel 1981). Perhaps then we should see these vessels and their contents as associated with specific female gender roles in the same way as the severed heads were associated with their male counterparts? In fact, bronze vessels of this kind often appear to have had female associations in the Iron Age. In the situla art of Northern Italy and the East Alpine region, for example, veiled women are depicted serving drinks from vessels similar to those depicted in stone at Entremont (e.g. Turk 2005, 61). These women have sometimes been interpreted simply as servants (Kastelic 1965), but their fine clothes and jewellery, the symbolically-charged nature of situla art imagery, and the context of many situlae as funerary offerings, suggests a more significant role. Knüsel (2002) has argued that the enormous bronze krater and associated artefacts found in the late 6th century BC grave at Vix denote the dead woman's role as a ritualist of immense influence and power. The massive krater thus symbolised transcendence and communication with the otherworld as well as

embodying great wealth and prestige (*ibid.*).

Conclusion

How then should we see the relationship between the male and female representations at Entremont in the 3rd century BC? Both sets of figures embody elite identities, though materialised in quite different, gender-specific ways. Both represent transactions with the supernatural; the males through warfare and violence, and the females through prestige metal vessels associated with the ritualised consumption of alcohol. Both were sufficiently important to be moved and re-displayed as the oppidum evolved from an early hilltop sanctuary to a heavily enclosed political capital. And both retained sufficient symbolic charge to merit their deliberate fragmentation in a fit of iconoclasm following the defeat of the Saluvian confederacy by the Roman army in the 120s BC. Together they display a balance of gendered power at the heart of the Saluvian capital.

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Chapter 7

Violence against women in Graeco-Roman Egypt: the contribution of Demotic documents

Christine Hue-Arcé

Introduction

Among the prejudices about ancient Egypt in the collective psyche, one is to see Egyptians as a violent people, mainly because of Juvenal, who depicted scenes of cannibalism in his fifteenth *Satire* (Juv., *Satires* XV, 75–92) (on the idea of a violent Egypt as an ideological construct of the Roman Empire relayed by Roman authors, see Bryen 2013, 26–50). Yet, when Egyptian women are addressed, people tend to see them as enjoying idyllic living conditions, almost as great as those of modern Western women: this idea mainly stems from the reversal of the behaviours traditionally attributed to men and women, presented in the second book of Herodotus' *Histories* (Her., *Histories* II, 35–36). Egyptian written, archaeological and iconographical source material provides evidence quite different from these two contradictory visions of ancient Egypt. Violence was present in the Nile Valley, but not to the extent that Juvenal seemed to imply. However, women of Egypt had to deal with it during the whole Egyptian history, as the source material shows. From the Old Kingdom (see for example the servant beaten by her mistress in the final part of *P. Westcar*, written during the Middle Kingdom, but situated during the reign of the Old Kingdom king Cheops; see Bagnato 2006, 80–83, and Parra Ortiz 2009, 142) to Late Antiquity (see e.g. Wilfong 2002, 42–43), one can see Egyptian women dealing with violence, in the texts as well as in the iconography. Thus, the life of women in the Nile Valley was not as

idyllic as some rare and high status cases may leave us believing (Broze 1999).

In this chapter, I will focus on interpersonal violence: that is, violence occurring in the setting of social interactions, in daily life (Riess 2012, 3–4). It excludes sorts of violence seen as legitimate, as military or punitive violence. Violence will be understood in its restricted meaning of “the deliberate exercise of physical force against a person” (OED Online 2014).

The question I want to address here is whether the sort of violence that was directed against women was different from that directed against men. This phenomenon is particularly interesting to study during the Graeco-Roman period, when Egypt was first under the rule of the Graeco-Macedonian dynasty of the Ptolemies, and then became a province of the Roman Empire (c. 4th century BC–3rd century AD).

For this epoch, there is great material diversity, including a few Demotic documents and a considerable body of Greek texts. From the Ptolemaic period onwards, administrative documents were written in Greek. However, a certain amount of non-literary texts (legal documents, letters, oaths) from the 3rd and 2nd century BC, as well as literary texts from the 5th century BC to the 2nd century AD, were written in the cursive writing of the Egyptian vernacular language, the Demotic.

During the last twenty-five years, the evidence from Greek documents for violence in Graeco-Roman Egypt has been well studied by papyrologists; some researchers have focused on either Ptolemaic or Roman Egypt (Bagnall 1989; Alston 1994; Bryen 2008; 2013), while others have specifically studied material regarding women (Adam 1983; Legras 1999; Parca 2002; Scheerlinck 2011; 2012).

However, the Greek documents have never been compared to the Demotic evidence. Mentions of violence in the Demotic texts have been sometimes commented on individually (cf. *infra*), but never studied as a whole. Literary as well as documentary Demotic papyri and ostraca bear witness to violence against women. The consideration of Demotic texts sheds new light on this social phenomenon, and allows us to build a more comprehensive picture of the features of interpersonal violence exerted against women during the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt. The systematic study of the Demotic evidence, the comparison of the testimonies of violence against women, with those concerning men, and with the evidence highlighted by papyrologists in the Greek documentation should help provide an answer to this question: Were there differences in the

expression, use, treatment, and perception of violence in Graeco-Roman Egypt based on the gender of the victim?

The Demotic evidence

Women

A few non-literary Demotic texts bear witness to violence against women. Among the whole Demotic documentary corpus from Graeco-Roman Egypt, only three texts explicitly report violent behaviours towards women. Two of these texts are part of an archive from the first half of the 2nd century BC. The third document is an oath taken in year 23 of Augustus's rule.

The two papyri of the 2nd century BC are part of the Siut archive, composed of documents from the trial between two half-brothers – Totoes and Difopis – who shared the same father but had different mothers (see the family tree established by Thompson 1934, x). When he was still alive, their father, Petetymis, was first married to Senesis, who gave him his first son, Totoes. Petetymis created a deed in favour of Senesis: this assured an annuity was paid to its recipient, but it could also give the beneficiary the right to inherit a property (Johnson 1994, 123; on these deeds of endowment, see also Ono 2001, 28–48); in our case, it made sure that Senesis' son, Totoes, would inherit his father's property. When Senesis died, Petetymis married again, to Taua; she, too, gave him a son, Difopis, and the husband made a deed of endowment to his new wife. Eventually, Petetymis died, and his two sons claimed their inheritance. The eldest of the two sons was married to Chered-Ankh; she was the one to denounce the deed of endowment in favour of the second wife, which would permit the youngest son to inherit a share (but not the whole) of the estate of Petetymis. Among the complaints and trial documents concerning this inheritance, Chered-Ankh reports violent acts against her husband and herself.

Indeed, in *P. Siut* 10591 B II 1–2 (cf. Thompson 1934, 3–33), dated from June 22, 170 BC, Chered-Ankh complains in a petition brought before judges (cf. *P. Siut* 10591 B I 7) that Difopis had her husband Totoes taken, and perhaps imprisoned (the word used, *ꜥ* *wl.t*, is a hapax, whose meaning is not clearly established, and could refer to a cage or stocks; see Thompson, 1934, 14); Difopis forced Totoes to make divide the property he inherited from his father. Chered-Ankh then reports that she was “forced” to confirm the division. Here, the Demotic word *ḏr* is used to refer to the use of force, which implies a physical compulsion (cf. Johnson 2001, 68–69).

The use of physical violence against Chered-Ankh is also expressed in *P. Siut* 10591 verso iv 9–10, dated from 170–169 BC (Thompson 1934, 49–62). This petition was written after judges seemingly decided that Difopis should have his share of Petetymis' property (Thompson 1934, xviii). Here, Chered-Ankh complains of being put in prison, where an official came to create a deed of cession (sh (n) wy, see Johnson, 2001, 22; maybe regarding the fields disputed between her husband and his brother); then, she was allegedly taken by force to a temple by a man who beat her violently (*mḥy=f ḥi qns*) and coerced (*ḥtr*) her. There is further mention of a deed, but this part of the text is not clear: the aggressor may have tried to force Chered-Ankh to sign a deed (perhaps the one written in prison), or, on the contrary, to take it from her. In any case, the violence exerted against her appears to be connected with the share of Petetymis' inheritance.

A last Demotic documentary text bears witness to violence exerted against a woman: a temple oath taken in 8 BC and housed in the *Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire* of Strasbourg (*O. Tempeleide* 224; cf. Kaplony-Heckel 1963, 362–363). Temple oaths were taken in the Djeme temple, in our case in front of a form of the god Amun: instead of referring to a legal authority, the victim referred to a divine authority. Yet, the oaths were legally recognised in case of litigation (cf. Vleeming 1994, 129–135; El-Aguizy 1996, 1–3). In our document, Pachnumis son of Polemon has to swear to Lulus son of Imuthes that he did not beat his wife:

“I did not beat (*mḥy*) Taesis, your wife, I did not go against the right(?) by beating ... her hand, that I did, while she grasped(?) my *in.nw*-cloth” (lines 3–5).

The defendant says that Taesis grasped his *in.nw*-cloth (on the reading *in.nw*, see Quack 2013, 100–105): he could be charging Taesis with trying to steal his clothes. Aggressions associated with thefts of garments are not uncommon in Greek texts from both Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt (see e.g. *P. Tebt.* II 278, Criobore 1996, 196–197; Bryn 2013, 216, 225, 228–229, 239–240). However, the man could also have tried to imply that the woman attacked him first. In both cases, Pachnumis would therefore be presenting the beating as self-defence.

At first sight, the two complaints from the Siut archive and the oath taken in Djeme are strikingly dissimilar. First, the complaints of Chered-Ankh were addressed to officials, while Lulus made Pachnumis swear to a deity. Yet, oaths were sometimes taken in the framework of lawsuits (El-Aguizy 1996, 1): thus, there is no formal conflict between

oaths and the judicial system. Quack (2008, 147) proposed that an oath was taken when there was no real proof of the guilt of the defendant; if he agreed to take the oath, the accused was seen as innocent, while if he refused, he was regarded as guilty and had to pay a fine accordingly. Secondly, the allegations of violence were addressed to different judicial bodies, but also by different persons. In the *P. Siut* 10591 B and verso, Chered-Ankh is the one who complained. In fact, all the complaints from Totoes' side were presented by his wife Chered-Ankh, while Totoes himself was most likely still alive (Thompson 1934, xvi). On the contrary, in *O. Tempeleide* 224, Taesis was represented by her husband. However, there could be a similarity in this difference: Totoes and Taesis may not have been able to represent themselves – Taesis could have suffered from the alleged aggression towards her, while it is possible that Totoes was imprisoned (cf. Thompson 1934, xvi–xvii). Thirdly, the very nature of the violent acts reported in the Siut archive and the oath from Djeme differs. The violent acts which concern Chered-Ankh seem to have been premeditated: the violence aimed to force the woman to sign or revoke the creation of a deed. The fact that she was taken against her will in a temple before allegedly being beaten, strengthens the idea of premeditation. In any case, in the two texts from the Siut archive, Chered-Ankh's aggressors could have deliberately used violence to obtain something from her. Here again, the circumstances are different to the oath taken in Djeme: Pachnumis seems to charge Taesis with trying to steal his clothes or attacking him first, and thus to allege self-defence. We have no way to establish if this was true; however, nothing indicates premeditation, unlike in the complaints of Chered-Ankh. Fourth, the punishments were different. In the oath of *O. Tempeleide* 224, Pachnumis is threatened with having to pay a fine, if he should refuse to swear the oath (this refusal seems to imply an acknowledgement of the physical aggression); however, the amount of the penalty is not known. Concerning the Siut documents, we do not know how Chered-Ankh's petition was received, or whether her aggressor was punished in any way. However, the use of fines to punish various crimes – including violence – by legal or divine authorities, or even in the setting of professional and religious associations, is well known in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt (see Préaux 1939, 405–412; Kaplony-Heckel 1963; Cénival 1972, 202–204; Bryen 2013, 132–133). If the violence exerted against Chered-Ankh was proved, her aggressors may have had to pay a penalty.

Therefore, the texts from the Siut archive and the oath housed in

Strasbourg appear to be quite different. Despite these differences, the three documents have common features in the way they express violence and its context. I emphasised the view that in the Siut archive, violence could have been premeditated, while in the oath, the defendant seemed to allege self-defence. However, the same verb is used in *P. Siut* 10591 verso and in *O. Tempeleide* 224: *mḥy* (“to beat”; cf. Johnson 2001, 218–219); no mention is made in any of the documents as to whether the beating was made using hands only or with an implement. Thus, no distinction in the Demotic vocabulary seems to be drawn according to the premeditation or the dangerousness of the weapon.

The comparison of these texts allows us to enlighten an important common denominator between them: in each case presented, violence seems to occur around economic matters. In the Siut archive, the main point, for Chered-Ankh, is to claim her husband’s right to the inheritance of Petetymis. In the oath from Djeme, Taesis could have been beaten while trying to steal Pachnumis’ *ḥn.nw*-cloth. This attempted theft would not be surprising, as the *ḥn.nw*-cloth could have a great value: some of them are known to have cost from 3,000 to 14,000 copper drachmas (see Clarysse and Lanciers 1989, 120); at that time, the monthly wage of a labourer was around 1,500–3,600 drachmas (Clarysse and Lanciers 1989, 117). However, it should be kept in mind that in *P. Siut* 10591 B and verso, economic matters are at the heart of the complaints, while violence is the *raison d’être* of the oath taken in *O. Tempeleide* 224. Nonetheless, goods or property are involved in all three texts.

In the known *corpus* of Demotic literature, five texts show clear acts of violence exerted against women (see Tab. 7.1).

The first of them is *P. Louvre* 2414 (Volten 1955, 269–280). This wisdom text (that is, a didactic text with sayings), written in the mid-2nd century BC (Lichtheim 1983, 93), originates in a clerical *milieu* (Legras 2011, 235–239). Some maxims refer to violence: some of them promote the beating of subordinate persons, while others warn against behaviours that could bring to violence (e.g. *P. Louvre* 2414 I 3, I 7). One advice is particularly interesting: the author advises his reader to beat his wife, if she was ever to insult him: “Do not disregard an insult from your wife. Beat her!” (*P. Louvre* 2414 II 8-9) (as for the belonging of wisdom texts to literature, see Vernus 2010-2011, 82–83).

The four other texts where violence is exerted against women are separate tales gathered on the same papyrus, the *P. Petese* II. This papyrus, written in the 2nd century AD, is a collection of tales on

virtues and vices of women, which must have been composed back in the Ptolemaic period (see Ryholt 2006, 16–17, 20). Among these stories, two tell tales of rape: the rape of a combatant’s mother (*P. Petese* II C1 II–III) and that of a woman named Hatmehit (*P. Petese* II D1). It is often difficult to determine if sexual intercourse in Egyptian texts are consensual or rape, because most of the time, the same verb is used, *nk*, referring to the penetration but neither implying nor denying consent (Eyre 1984, 93). But in the stories related in *P. Petese* II, the use of compulsion is clearly expressed: *P. Petese* II C1 III 22–23 states that “taking her by force, is what this enemy did”, while in *P. Petese* II D1 x + 6, it is written that the aggressor of Hatmehit “desired her very much. He had her brought to his home by force. He lay down with her”. Therefore, in these two stories, there is no doubt about the compelled nature of the sexual intercourse. In another tale of this papyrus, all the women of Pharaoh’s harem are sentenced to death because they were unfaithful (“the capital punishment [*btw*] was inflicted to the 40 women of the harem”; *P. Petese* II C1 I–II). It must be noted here, that violence is employed as a punishment, and thus seen as legitimate. Finally, another story is focused on a man who tries to bury his wife alive in order to marry another woman (*P. Petese* II D7 II–D8). The end of this tale is lost: the potential punishment risked by the violent husband is not known.

Table 7.1. Literary texts mentioning violence against women

	Document	Demotic	Translation	Date
<i>P. Louvre</i> 2414 (Volten, 1955, 269–280)	Wisdom	<i>mhy</i>	To beat	Mid-2nd c. BC
<i>P. Petese</i> II C1 II–III (Ryholt 2006, 47–58)		<i>t3y n qns</i>	To take by force (rape)	3rd–1st c. BC
<i>P. Petese</i> II, D1 (Ryholt 2006, 101–107)	Tales	<i>di=f in=w s r n3y=</i> <i>f [‘wy.w] n qns</i> <i>sdr=f irm=s</i>	“He had her brought to his home by force. He lay down with her”.	(Copy from the 2nd c. AD)
<i>P. Petese</i> II C1 I–II (Ryholt 2006, 36–41)		<i>btw</i>	Capital punishment	
<i>P. Petese</i> II D7 II & D8 (Ryholt 2006, 122–127)		<i>hm.t r w°.t ʿfty</i>	“[his] wife in the sarcophagus”.	

Violence exerted against women is expressed in a more varied way in the literary texts than in the documentary evidence. One might wonder why there is such a difference. Does the literature present cases of violence which were not deemed worthy of being brought to legal authorities (notwithstanding the capital punishment inflicted by the King, who was above all earthly authority)? Or are these tales entirely fictitious? No authoritative conclusion can be reached about this matter. The answer may lie between these two reasons: literary

texts could have related actual violent acts, but of an exceptional and rare, even extreme sort, hence their absence from the current documentary evidence.

A characteristic similar to most of the literary documents can be underlined: sexuality. Indeed, two texts report rapes, the murder of the women of the harem of the pharaoh is linked to their suspected adultery, and it is the desire for another woman that makes the man of *P. Petese* II D7–D8 bury his wife. All those tales are part of *P. Petese* II: when violence against women occurs in this papyrus, it seems to revolve around their sexuality. It could be linked to the will of men to control female sexuality, to have “certainty about the origins of [their] children” (Dieleman 1998, 44–45). This is consistent with another feature detectable in some literary texts: the right of the husband over his wife, expressed in the wisdom of *P. Louvre* 2414 and the killing of the women of Pharaoh in *P. Petese* II C1 I–II.

It is worth noticing that the types of violence, and the vocabulary used to express it, are much diversified in literature; but when it comes to “beating” (*P. Louvre* 2414) the term used is still *mḥy*, as it was the case in the documentary evidence when this action occurred. Therefore, a single word is adopted to designate two similar violent acts exerted towards a woman, even if they appear in two different categories of texts.

Men

Documents describing acts of violence exerted against men are more numerous than those reporting violence against women; yet, they still represent a small proportion of the whole documentary and literary corpus as currently known.

Fifteen non-literary texts present violence against men: one oath, two petitions, five letters and seven association regulations (see Tab. 7.2).

Just as there are more documents mentioning violence against men, there is also a higher variety of vocabulary and categories of aggression than for women. For the sole action of beating, several words are used: the verb *mxy* is found again, along with other verbs and substantives referring to this action (*ḥwṯ*, *fy-ḏr.t*, *sh*, *sḡsg*). Yet, some of these words (*ḥwṯ* and *fy-ḏr.t*) are used only in a single document, *P. Assoc.* 8. In the documentary texts concerning men, the explicit notion of murder (*ḥtb*, “to kill”) is introduced. Despite the diversification of the vocabulary, the most commonly word used is still *mḥy*, which was also the only verb employed in the documentary texts about female victims.

Among the non-literary texts describing violence against men, the association regulations deserve special mention (see Tab. 7.2). Association regulations listed the rules that members of a religious and/or professional association had to respect (see Cénival 1972). Those texts are specific, because they are not about violence that was actually exerted, but the threat of punishment if someone were to commit it. This punishment usually took the shape of a fine, which differed from one association to another. However, a permanent feature concerns the aggressor's and victim's status: with the exception of *P. Vogl. Dem. Inv. 77*, a superior's fine for beating a member of the association was always higher than a mere member's fine for beating the same superior (see Tab. 7.3). The fine was therefore proportional to the aggressor's status, not to the victim's. The noticeable difference between the fines of the *P. Assoc. 1* and those of the other texts is due to the inflation at the end of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 2nd century BC (see Cadell and Le Rider 1997, 74–76).

The oath, the petitions and most of the letters aim to denounce violent aggressions already committed. Yet, the author of *Saq. H5-DP 241*, an early Ptolemaic letter, dreads to be killed or attacked, but has not yet suffered the violence when he writes.

It was underlined above that in the documentary evidence of violence exerted against women, the violent act is linked to economic matters. This association is also present in some of the non-literary texts concerning men: possession of some goods (*P. Oxf. Griffith 38*) and inheritance (*P. Siut 10591 B*) are especially involved in the two petitions. Yet, violence against the clergy (*P. Oxf. Griffith 24*) and revenge for earlier wrongdoings (*Saq. H5-DP 241*) can also play a role in violent behaviours. Thus, violence against men was not as consistently linked to economic matters as violence against women.

Table 7.2. Documentary texts describing violence against men, according to the kind of document

	Document	Demotic	Translation	Date
<i>O. Vleem.</i> 57 (Vleeming, 1994: 129–135)	Oath	<i>‘dn.t sh</i>	Injury	2nd c. BC
<i>P. Oxf. Griffith</i> 38 (Bresciani, 1975: 44–46)	Petitions	<i>mhy</i> <i>sh</i>	To beat Blow	159 BC
<i>P. Siut</i> 10591 B (Thompson, 1934: 3–33)		<i>htr</i>	Coercion	170 BC
<i>Saq.</i> H5-DP 241 (Smith, 2009: 331–346)		<i>hth</i>	To kill	4th–3rd c. BC
<i>P. Oxf. Griffith</i> 24 (Bresciani, 1975: 26–29)	Letters	<i>sgsg</i>	Beating	146/135 BC
<i>P. Götterbriefe</i> 9 (Hughes, 1969: 43–54)		<i>mhy</i> <i>hwy ipy.t m-s³</i>	To beat To throw an oipe- vase at someone	1st c. BC
<i>P. Dodgson</i> (Bresciani, 1988: 55–70)		<i>hth</i>	To kill	1st c. BC
<i>P. Berlin P</i> 13608 (Spiegelberg, 1930: 53–57)		<i>hth.t=f tw=w</i> <i>šm=f r t³ hlt</i>	“He was killed and thrown in the canal”	91 BC
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 1 (Cévinat, 1972: 3–10)		<i>mhy</i>	To beat	223 BC
<i>P. Vogl. Dem. Inv.</i> 77 (Bresciani, 1994: 46–67)	Association regulations	<i>mhy</i>	To beat	178 BC
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 3 (Cévinat, 1972: 45–58)		<i>mhy</i>	To beat	157 BC
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 5 (Cévinat, 1972: 63–68)		<i>mhy</i>	To beat	147 BC
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 6 (Cévinat, 1972: 73–81)		<i>mhy</i>	To beat	145 BC
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 7 (Cévinat, 1972: 66–71)		<i>mhy</i>	To beat	137 BC
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 8 (Cévinat, 1972: 93–91)		<i>hwi</i> <i>mhy</i>	To beat To beat	137 BC
		<i>fy dr.t r</i>	Lay a hand on	

Table 7.3. Fines (in kite) to pay by the superior of the association if he would beat someone, or by a member who would beat him. Not appearing in this table are *P. Assoc.* 3 and *P. Assoc.* 7, which are incomplete

	<i>The superior beats the superior</i>	
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 1	8	10
<i>P. Vogl. Inv. Dem.</i> 77	400	400
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 5	1200	1500
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 6	650	850
<i>P. Assoc.</i> 8	1000	1500

A last documentary text must be mentioned: the papyrus *Rylands* 9 (Vittmann 1998). This document dates back to the 6th or 5th century BC, and is therefore prior to the period studied in this chapter. Yet, being very rich in terms of violence, this text cannot be omitted. The author, Petisis, relates the misfortunes of his family on several generations: this chronicle is on the border between the documentary and narrative genres (Depauw 1997: 102). Petisis and his ancestors suffered several physical aggressions, including attempted murder

(*ḥdb* = *w* (*wi*) *n* *shy* *i.īr* = *w* *ḥ3** = *n* *īw* = *w* *ḏd st mwt*, “They beat me to death and they abandoned us, saying ‘they are dead’”; *P. Rylands* 9 II 13, see Vittmann 1998: 7) and actual murder (*ḥdb* = *w st n shy*, “They beat them to death”; *P. Rylands* 9 XI 7–9, see Traunecker 2008: 385–386). It is worth noticing that while Demotic evidence from Hellenistic and Roman Egypt do not witness corporal punishment to sanction violence, in *P. Rylands* 9, the intended punishment of Petisis’ aggressors is a beating (*sh n šwt 50 γ s*, “50 blows per man”; Vittmann 1998: 10).

Violence exerted against men appears also in Demotic literature. Surprisingly, while violence against women was more present in literary evidence than in documentary texts, the opposite applies when the victim is male. Where eleven documentary texts deal with violent acts towards a man, such an action can only be found in eight literary texts (see Tab. 7.4): three wisdom texts and five tales. In these documents, as in literature concerning women, the kinds of violence and the vocabulary are more varied than in the documentary evidence. However, the verb *mhy* is found repeatedly, as in the non-literary documents regarding men as well as women.

The notion of murder occurs also quite often: the verb *ḥtb*, “to kill”, is used in half of the documents, as much in wisdoms as in tales.

The violence exerted in the five tales is seen as reprehensible. In *P. BM* 10508 A, a conspiracy, alluded to as a “bad design”, is created to murder Pharaoh. In *O. Stras. Inv. D.* 1824, a man received a beating (*mhy*) by his brother’s henchmen, because he asked for food. In *P. Petese* II C1 I–II, Pharaoh throws an object after a man, killing him instantly. In *P. Petese* II C1 II–III, the father of a combatant is murdered on his bed. Finally, in *P. Carlsberg* 608, C04.10, a man is beaten by noblemen. In all of these texts, the violence exerted or suffered is perceived as negative by the narrator.

The picture is more nuanced in Demotic wisdom texts concerning men. The authors advise readers to avoid violence and to dread its consequences:

“Do not insult an ordinary man; when insult occurs, beating follows, and when beating occurs, murder follows; murder does not occur without the god knowing it” (*P. BM* 10508 C XXII 21–24); “He who shows a violent character, is the one who goes to a bad death” (*P. Insinger* XXIII 14).

	Document	Demotic	Translation	Date
<i>P. BM 10508 C</i> (Chauveau and Agut-Labordère, 2011: 280–305)		<i>mḥy</i>	To beat	5th–1st c. BC
		<i>ḥtb</i>	To kill	(Copy from the 1st c. BC)
<i>P. Louvre 2414</i> (Volten, 1955: 269–280)		<i>ḥtb</i>	To kill	Mid-2nd c. BC
		<i>mwt</i>	Death	
<i>P. Insinger</i> (Chauveau and Agut-Labordère, 2011: 23–271)	Wisdoms	<i>dr³ t³y dr.t</i>	hold strongly	
		<i>šbt</i>	Stick	Mid-1st c. BC
		<i>qns</i>	Force/violence	
		<i>ḥtb</i>	To kill	
		<i>mwt</i>	Death	
<i>P. BM 10508 A</i> (Chauveau and Agut-Labordère, 2011: 275–279)		<i>ḥtb</i>	To kill	5th–4th c. BC
		<i>š-šḥn bn</i>	“bad design”	(Copy from the 1st c. BC)
<i>O. Stras. Inv. D. 1824</i> (Thissen, 2004: 587–594)		<i>mḥy</i>	To beat	1st–2nd c. AD
		<i>sh</i>	Blow	
<i>P. Petese II C1 I–II</i> (Ryholt, 2006: 36–41)	Tales	<i>ḥwi m-s²</i>	Throw after	3rd–1st c. BC
<i>P. Petese II C1 II–III</i> (Ryholt, 2006: 47–58)		<i>mwt</i>	Death	(Copy from the 2nd c. AD)
<i>P. Carlsberg 608, C04.10</i> (Jasnow and Zauzich, 2005: 414)		<i>mḥy</i>	To beat	3rd c. BC

However, in some of these didactic documents, the use of violence seems to be legitimated and justified, notably when exerted by a master on his servant. Some of these texts advise readers not to flee punishment, and praise the virtues of the stick:

“It is to educate the troublemaker that Thot let the stick on earth” (*P. Insinger* IX 6–7). “Stick and shame are the protection of his son against the villain” (*P. Insinger* IX 11). “The servant who is not beaten, great is the curse in his heart” (*P. BM 10508 C VII 18*).

These last documents are enlightening when compared to the literary evidence regarding women. In the tale of *P. Petese II C1 I–II*, Pharaoh has the women of his harem killed because they were unfaithful; in the wisdom of *P. Louvre 2414 II 8–9*, the author advises his reader to answer to an insult from his wife by beating her (cf. *supra*). In these two literary texts, these specific violent behaviours seem to be regarded positively, as is the violence used by a master against his servant (see *P. BM 10508 C VII 18*). Can we therefore infer that violence used by a husband against his wife was seen as legitimate? This could explain why the documentary evidence bears no witness to domestic violence. However, such a conclusion has to be taken with extreme caution; views expressed in literary texts are not

always a faithful reflection of the reality. Wisdom texts were written by men, most likely for a male audience (Dieleman 1998, 43–46): the positive emphasis of wife beating is thus less surprising. These texts present the *patria potestas* of the man over his wife, children and servants (on *patria potestas* in Greek and Roman Egypt, see Huebner 2013, 66). Besides, it must be reminded that the lack of documents can distort our vision.

Moreover, the absence of domestic violence in the documentary evidence may be due to another factor: the framework in which the violent act happened or was denounced (cf. *infra*).

The Greek documents

One particularity of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt lies in the bilingualism of the written documentation. A research would not be complete without the consideration of Greek documents. Mentions of violence exerted against women in Greek texts have been well studied by the papyrologists: the conclusions of their research will be compared to the features underlined regarding the Demotic evidence.

Several texts in Greek show violence against women (Bryen 2013, 214–278, counted no less than 135 petitions concerning violent behaviours for the Roman period alone, among which 36 concern violence against women). The Greek evidence is mostly composed of legal documents, particularly petitions addressed to officials – most of the time, the *strategos* of the Nome.

Texts mentioning violence against women are far more numerous in Greek than in Demotic. At first sight, the preponderance of Greek documents might surprise. However, both Hellenic and Egyptian people used Greek for legal documents. From the mid-2nd century BC, a subscription in Greek had to be written at the end of legal documents in Demotic (Depauw, *et al.* 2014, 33). From that point, there were far fewer legal texts in Demotic and many more in Greek. As far as I am aware, there is no complaint against violence written in Demotic later than the mid-2nd century BC. This phenomenon could also be linked to the disappearance of the Laocrites, the justice court reserved for Egyptian people (see Modrzejewski 2011, 138–139). Besides, it must be expressed that Greek texts are mostly from the Roman period, while almost all the Demotic documents date back to the Ptolemaic period: 14 published Greek texts reporting violence against women were analysed to study violence against women during the Ptolemaic period, and 36 for the Roman era. This difference reflects the state of the publications as well as the division of the

known documentation: there are considerably more Greek documents during the Roman period (see Delattre and Heilporn 2014, 317–318).

Through the study of the Greek legal texts, papyrologists pointed out some interesting features of interpersonal violence exerted against women in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt. In so doing, Legras (1999, 233) was able to emphasize that Greek documents from the Ptolemaic period depict as much violence by women towards women as by men towards women: this suggests that there was no predominance of a violence committed by men to women specifically because they were women. Moreover, Greek texts do not stress any specific sort of violence exerted against women that could not have been exerted towards men (Legras 1999, 230).

It is worth noting that women could undertake legal action themselves in Hellenistic Egypt to complain against violence: this autonomy, already met in Demotic texts (see e.g. *P.Siut* 10591 B, cf. *supra*), has been underlined by Scheerlinck (2011–2012, 176) for the Greek documents.

Some Greek texts specifically mention violence against pregnant women (Legras 1999, 230–231); those aggressions were considered as an aggravation of the penal offence of *hubris* (Adam 1983, 16–19). These texts stress pregnancy, not gender; therefore, it could be argued that only the endangerment of a potential son was feared. However, Parca (2002, 292–293) showed that if a miscarriage or a stillborn followed the aggression, it seems that no compensation was sought for the loss of the child; furthermore, the endangerment of the woman's life is taken in account in the punishment inflicted to the aggressor. It is difficult to ascertain whether the violence against pregnant women was considered as violence against the mother or against the child to be. While violent acts against pregnant women are attested in at least four Greek documents, it is rather surprising to notice that there is no mention of such violence in Demotic texts. As regards the documentary Demotic evidence, this absence could be related to the small number of legal documents mentioning violence against women (no more than three). It is more remarkable to find no mention of such violence in the literary evidence, which is more voluminous than the documentary one. It would be legitimate to wonder whether the absence of aggressions on pregnant women in Demotic could be due to an ethnic factor or linked to the period investigated. However, complaints in Greek about this kind of violence are actually known as much for the Ptolemaic (see *P. Tebt.* III 800) as for the Roman period (see *PSI* III 167). They are perpetrated by and against people with Greek and Egyptian names – which does not permit to ascertain

whether they were from a Greek or Egyptian *milieu* –, as well as by and against Jews from Alexandria (see *P. Oxy.* II 315 for Greek names, *P. Mich.* 228 for Egyptian names, and *P. Tebt.* III 800 for Jews). It must be remembered that after the mid-2nd century BC, legal documents – including complaints – were more readily written in Greek. This factor most probably plays a meaningful part in the lack of Demotic documents reporting violent behaviours towards pregnant women.

It cannot be shown that violence against pregnant women was exerted because of their gender, and accordingly treated in a specific way by the legal authorities. Yet, violence could have been specifically exerted against women during their childhood. The study of the sex-ratio for Hellenistic Egypt based on tax receipts could indeed indicate exposition and infanticide against new-born girls, amongst the Greek population (Clarysse 2006, 311). This practice could also have been exerted during the Roman period. The Roman provincial government organised a regular census of the inhabitants of the Empire: among the Greek papyri from Egypt, 300 are census files concerning Egyptian declarants, dated between 11 and 258 AD. Demographic surveys based on these files (Bagnall and Frier 1994) indicate an unbalanced sex ratio in favour of male infants in Roman Egypt. From this, Bagnall and Frier (1994, 151–153) made the assumption of infanticide against females. Such a phenomenon would then be considered as being specific violence according to gender. However, the same scholars pointed out that the difference in the life expectancy (which impacts the sex ratio) could also be explained by a tendency to overvalue men's age after 60: tax amounts were actually evaluated according to the age (Bagnall and Frier 1994, 107).

Although cases of rape are attested in the Demotic literature, Greek documents do not seem to mention any sexual assault. This dissimilarity between the Demotic and Greek documents regarding attestations of rape is easily explained by the difference in their recording of it: rapes only occur in literary Demotic evidence, while the Greek documents from Egypt, concerning the life *in* Egypt, are documentary (mainly complaints, official reports and letters). Legras (1999, 234) thinks that the material silence could be explained by a concealment of such violent acts, maybe for a matter of family honour. This point could also be relevant for the Demotic documentary evidence.

I previously underlined that although Demotic literary documents mention domestic violence, such aggressions are absent from the documentary evidence in this language. A few mentions of domestic violence are found in Greek papyri (Bryen 2013, 181). They usually

occur not in petitions, but in divorce proceedings (see, for example, the case of a woman who reports, in the framework of a divorce proceeding from late Roman Egypt, that her husband used to beat her; cf. *P. Oxy.* L 3581).

The greater part of Greek documents from the Ptolemaic period mentioning acts of violence against women tends to show a correlation between violence and economic matters (Legras 1999); the same phenomenon has been underlined with Demotic material (cf. *supra*). If the plaintiff asks for a punishment in petitions denouncing violence against pregnant women (e.g. *P. Tebt.* III 800; cf. *supra*), such occurrences are rare: the victim or its family rather tries to obtain the return of some property or money. Bryen (2013, 132–133, 181) highlighted a similar scheme for the reports of violent behaviours from Roman Egypt, as much for men as for women.

Thus, the consideration of the papyrologists' studies on violence in Greek and Roman Egypt highlighted common features as well as differences with the Demotic evidence. The main dissimilarity is the stress on the pregnancy when pregnant women are victims of violence in Greek texts: yet, the very small amount of Demotic documentary texts could easily explain the absence of such a phenomenon in those documents.

Conclusion

The material from Graeco-Roman Egypt does not indicate that women were subject to a higher or a lower rate of violence than men. When a violent act was exerted towards a woman, it seems to have been generally expressed in the same way than when it was exerted towards a man. The written evidence shows no specific vocabulary for aggressions towards females. The results of Bagnall and Frier's (1994) and Clarysse (2006, 311) demographic studies could suggest violence against little girls at birth; however, such a practice is attested neither in Demotic nor in Greek documents (on exposure and female infanticide, see Grubbs 2013, 91, and Huebner, forthcoming).

Demotic documentary evidence bears no witness to domestic violence exerted towards women. However, two literary texts could be seen as legitimating such behaviours. In those documents, violent actions by a husband against his wife are presented positively. Even so, violence is expressed in the same way as that of a master towards his servant; their authors do not seem to stress the gender of the victim, but rather the status: violence is presented as that of a superior towards an inferior.

Yet, to my mind, if domestic violence was rarely denounced to legal authorities, this has nothing to do with its potential legitimization. Rather, I think that such violence was not deemed worthy of being reported, as long as no economic matter was attached to it. Indeed, economic considerations play a part in almost all the documentary texts – Greek or Demotic. Violence takes place as an enhancer-element of a report. The point of the plaintiff is very often to ask for the return of some good or property; he or she strengthens the complaint by saying that the good was taken by force, or requests the payment of a fine.

In situations where no economic matter was linked to the acts of violence, it seems that people rarely turned to the legal authorities to report it. Yet, it does not mean that violent affairs were not regulated, or that the use of violence was seen as conform to the values of Egyptian society. On the contrary, several indicators suggest that violent conflicts were settled through the family or a restricted circle of relations.

Letters from the New Kingdom provide evidence for a part of the family in conflicts' regulation: in a letter from the end of the 20th dynasty (11th century BC), some people want to beat the mistress of an adulterous man; a man of the mistress' family clearly tries to mediate (*P. BM 10416*; see Neveu 2001, 25–32). The family also takes part in mythological literature. By studying different versions of the conflict between Horus and Seth (in which the two gods claim their right on the throne of Egypt) from the Old Kingdom, the New Kingdom and the Late Period, Campagno (2009, 31–43) underlined a balance between the logic of kinship and the logic of state in this myth. To solve the conflict between the uncle and the nephew, a tribunal of gods meets, and judges them (logic of state); yet, the final decision is made according to the opinion of Osiris, who asks that his son Horus should inherit his throne (logic of kinship).

This involvement of the family is not known through the Demotic documentary evidence. Bryen (2013, 134–135) underlined that Greek documents from Roman Egypt brought little evidence of violence settled extra-legally; yet, he identified some cases in which revenge could have been preferred to an official report. If we turn to Demotic literary evidence, we find some indications of the part played by the restricted circle of relations. In *P. Petese II C1 II–III*, the mother of a combatant is raped (cf. *supra*), and his father killed. When the combatant discovers those crimes, he turns to a friend, to whom he asks to help him to revenge his father (notice that he does not ask revenge for his mother).

From these considerations a general and hypothetical scheme can be advanced to describe the process of complaint when a violent act occurred, whatever the gender of the victim. Individuals could have turned in the first instance to the family or their near relations to regulate violence. If this restricted circle did not succeed to solve the dispute, or if it was related to an economic matter, victims may have looked to the legal system for justice.

As for the specific case of violence against women, it has to be remembered that ancient Egypt – including during the Graeco-Roman times – was a patriarchal society (Huebner 2013, 49, 200). Even if women could manage economic affairs (and were sometimes expected to help their husbands in managing property: see Dieleman 1998, 18), most of the time these matters were under men's responsibility (see Johnson 1996, 178). Therefore, violent acts towards women may have been less likely to be connected to economic considerations than those towards men. This could explain the lower rate of written evidence for violence against women than against men: because it was more rarely reported to legal authorities.

The consideration of Demotic literary and documentary evidence, even though its restricted amount, brings new pieces of information that contribute to a better comprehension of the mechanisms of expression and regulation of interpersonal violence exerted against women in Graeco-Roman Egypt.

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Chapter 8

Death and the maiden: Late antique images of nubile females as agents and victims of lethal violence

Susanne Moraw

Introduction

Girls are females who have not yet undergone a rite of passage that makes them fit into the social category of “women” (Moraw and Kieburg 2014, 13–26). As such they can be rather small, for example a new-born baby, or already fully grown: physically an adult but socially still a girl, like the virgin goddess Athena. As a rule, girls are only rarely depicted in late antique art. Girls from real life are almost absent, apart from dead girls depicted in a funerary context (e.g. Fittschen and Zanker 2014, 168 no. 194) or, most rarely, girls still alive depicted in a dedicatory context (e.g. Hennessy 2008, 111–116). More acceptable to the late antique mindset seemed to be the depiction of fictional girls: girls from biblical stories and, most of all, girls from Graeco-Roman myth. These girls appear in diverse narrative contexts, many of which involve a certain degree of violence, some of which was lethal.

A feature common to all these fictional girls is the fact that they are already on the verge of womanhood: fully grown, with developed anatomy, beautiful, and sexy. Smaller girls, not to mention baby girls, are almost never rendered in such scenes. Depictions of boys, on the other hand, are much more multifaceted. There are a lot of boys of different ages in scenes of real life, much more than children who can

positively be identified as girls (Uzzi 2005; cf. Hennessy 2008, 74); the same goes for funerary or dedicatory monuments (Backe-Dahmen 2006, 99). And although boys in mythical or biblical scenes tend to be rendered as beautiful and fully grown too (for a naked youth as object of female desire, see Moraw 2008b, 219–221 fig. 4), there are also depictions of smaller boys of different ages, either as main protagonists (see the popular narrative cycles on the childhood of Achilles: Leader-Newby 2004, 125–136) or as minor character (see e.g. the “Vienna Genesis” with Joseph’s little brother, Benjamin: Hennessy 2008, 86–87 pl. 3). The artists’ preference for fully grown girls is due to society’s general focus on girls of nubile age, i.e. on girls who are near to what society considered their true destiny and main task: marriage and children. Girls close to that destiny were depicted as the most desirable (Moraw and Kieburg 2014, 16–17).

The historical period under discussion is the time of the Late Antique Roman Empire, i.e. roughly the 3rd to 6th centuries AD. In recent years, Late Antiquity received a lot of scholarly attention; see e.g. the latest Oxford Handbook (Johnson 2012).

This chapter will look at Late Antique depictions of mythical and biblical girls involved in lethal and sometimes other forms of violence from four different angles: firstly, and most often depicted, girls as victims of male–female violence; related to this is violence against girls performed by animals who act as agents of a given male; thirdly, more rarely depicted, girls as perpetrators of male–female violence; and finally, most rarely depicted, girls as both agents and victims of female–female violence. The objects that were decorated with these images come from a wide range of genres: sculpture, both relief and in the round; floor mosaics; book painting; luxury items like carved ivories or silver dishes; amulets; coins. It should be kept in mind – though this is not the focus of this essay – that all of them were used and gazed at in specific social contexts, each with specific rules and semantics (cf. Leader-Newby 2004; or Lavan, Swift, and Putzeys 2007). This goes also for images that today are labelled pornographic (Clarke 2013). Also not in the focus of this essay are literary depictions concerning the same topics. In some cases, mention will be made to an especially striking parallel. But as a whole, “Death and the maiden in late antique literature” would deserve an analysis of its own (cf. the pioneering work of Winkler 1974, or Beck 1986).

In analysing these images, three aspects proved to be of special importance. The first one is status, or power. This should not be a surprise, as Late Antiquity was obsessed with hierarchy. As Robert A. Kaster (1988, 60–61) once put it: “One of the cardinal virtues,

verecundia, can be translated as ‘modesty’; more accurately, it names the sense of propriety deriving from a regard for the opinion of other men and an awareness of one’s own position (especially one’s hierarchical position) relative to others in a given context.” The second aspect is, also not too surprising, an articulate sexualisation of the females depicted. As mentioned above, the kind of girl that was considered worthy of being depicted was the girl of nubile age. As such, she had to look as alluring as possible. The third aspect is the persona of the viewer. In a patriarchal society as the late Roman one, the ideal viewer was the elite Roman male (cf. Richlin 1992a). Consequently, most Late Antique images were rendered by the artists in order to fit to the elite male gaze.

If these three aspects – power relationship, sexualisation, and male viewer – are taken together, we come close to the issue of pornography. The term “pornography” is an invention of the 19th century (Clarke 2013). From a socio-historical point of view, it was termed by elite males who had both the desire and the discursive power to define those depictions of naked females they were gazing at as “art” – and simultaneously depreciated the cheap and mass-produced depictions of naked females consumed by the lower classes as “pornography” (Nead 1992, 12–16, 83–108; for the difficulty, or rather impossibility of a clear-cut distinction between art and pornography, see also Maes 2013). Thus, the context out of which the term pornography arose was quite gloomy: the 19th century morality crusades against masturbation (especially by children), birth control, prostitution, homosexuality, and all other sexual practices considered deviant or perverted (Rubin 1999, 143–148). This historical background caused scholars like Gayle Rubin to argue for a positive attitude towards pornography (Rubin 1999, 165–171). But unfortunately, pornography has got its gloomy sides, too. Pornography is not simply a means of depicting sexual acts; it is rather, and very often, a means of expressing and reinforcing gender specific power structures, of downgrading and humiliating women. From a strictly feminist point of view, pornography – in the sense of the presentation of females in a way that sexualises and objectifies them, often violently – is the essence of gender relations in a patriarchal society (the classic study is Dworkin 1979, cf. Richlin 1992a, xiv–xviii; Purcell 2012). Transfer from modern theory to ancient texts and images was first done by Amy Richlin in her 1992 *Pornography and representation in Greece & Rome*, with special regard to the theory of representation by Susanne Kappeler (1986). For the present essay, however, the already mentioned work of Andrea Dworkin (1979) and the work on

hardcore pornographic films done by Natalie Purcell (2012) turned out to be more fruitful. The late antique images will first be analysed iconographically and then will be tentatively compared with modern texts, images or films that are labelled “pornographic”. As sexuality is always rooted in and construed by a specific socio-historical context (cf. Rubin 1999, 149–150), we cannot be certain if the ancient images were actually understood in the same way as is today’s pornography. (To be on safer grounds, one would need Late Antique texts that explicitly tell us about Late Antique viewers of these images, and about the effects that the images caused in them.) But there are at least two points of comparison: First, the fact that both ancient images and modern pornography are products of a more (Late Antiquity) or less (today) patriarchal and stratified society; and second, the fact that they have certain motifs in common.

Girls as victims of male – female violence

As already mentioned, this category provides us with the largest amount of Late Antique images related to gendered violence. Diverse as the topics depicted may be, one fact is common to all of them: within the given frame, the male perpetrator is of higher status than his female victim. This is, as one would expect, primarily due to the well-known gender bias of late antique society (see e.g. Brooten 1996, 277–280). In consequence, a female member of a given social stratum would have (almost) always been considered inferior to a male member of the same stratum. But often in these images, the hierarchy between perpetrator and victim is additionally emphasised by other factors, by more fundamental differences: e.g. the difference between god and mortal, between high status and low status, between good and evil. Here, one can grasp the aforementioned Late Antique obsession with status and hierarchy. It seems that in order to justify the depiction of brutal violence against a female, the status difference between perpetrator and victim had to be larger than the one provided by simple gender bias within a given social stratum.

A popular motif, both in late antique art and literature, was the killing of an Amazon, a maiden warrior, by a mythical hero (Devambez and Kauffmann-Samaras 1981). As a rule, these images are conspicuously sexualised (Fendt 2005). The same goes for the texts, e.g. Quintus Smyrnaeus, *The Fall of Troy* 1.592–629 as to Achilles killing Penthesilea. A small bronze from the early 4th century AD (Devambez and Kauffmann-Samaras 1981, 597 no. 167) depicts the killing of the Amazonian queen Hippolyta by Heracles (Fig. 8.1).

Heracles, with club and lion's skin, raises his left hand in order to seize Hippolyta's hair and to snatch her off the running horse. Accordingly, the queen rears up in pain. Her body curves, thus allowing the viewer to focus on breasts and abdomen. Prominently placed is Hippolyta's belt that, in this case, has a double meaning: At first, winning this belt constituted one of Heracles' labours, as ordered by king Eurystheus (e.g. Hyginus, *Fables* 30). On a second level, however, loosening a female's belt was an allegory for the wedding union, or, more broadly, for having intercourse with a woman, for deflowering her (Oakley and Sinos 1993, 32 and note no. 73). As to the status hierarchy: According to Greek myth, both murderer and victim were children of a mortal mother begotten by a divine father. But Heracles was said to be son of Zeus, the highest god in the Graeco-Roman pantheon, while Hippolyta was only a daughter of Ares, the god of war.



Figure 8.1. Small bronze: Heracles and Hippolyta. Early 4th century CE. Bonn, Rheinisches Landesmuseum CLIX. (LVR – Landesmuseum Bonn)

My second example for a strongly sexualised lethal attack on a maiden comes from a Jewish-Christian context. The 3rd to 5th centuries AD provide us with a large number of amulets representing King Solomon's victory over the female demon Lilith (e.g. Michel

2001, 268–279). In theological thinking, Solomon, the biblical king, was conceived as a prefiguration of Christ himself, symbolizing “good”. Lilith, on the other hand, was a demon symbolizing “evil”. She was imagined as being unable to bear living children – i.e. unable to fully achieve the status of a woman – and as devouring the children of other women instead (Scurlock 1991). Thus, the amulets in question were probably used for protecting little children. The standard iconographic pattern is shown in [Figure 8.2](#).



Figure 8.2. Hematite gem: Solomon and Lilith. 3rd–5th centuries CE. Hamburg, private collection (Skoluda). (Simone Michel-von Dungern)

Solomon (name inscribed) is on horseback, dressed in military costume. Underneath his horse’s hooves is a small naked female figure with loose hair, Lilith. Lying on her back she raises her hands in a helpless and pleading gesture – a vain attempt to stop Solomon from thrusting his lance into her breast. Lilith’s nakedness serves to emphasise her helpless and vulnerable condition (cf. Moraw 2008a, 136–139). Simultaneously, however, it constructs her as a sexual being, as the victim of a phallic aggression emblemized by Solomon’s lance. Solomon will penetrate Lilith with his lance and thus reinforce the “Greco-Roman sexual dichotomy between passive

(penetrated, symbolically female) and active (penetrator, male)” (Richlin 1992a, xix). As instrument of penetration, the king’s lance acts as a symbolic equivalent of the penis. One may compare this to modern pornography that often stages the penis as the ultimate male weapon and symbol of power (Dworkin 1979, 15) providing the male member with a quasi-sacral aura (for “cock worship” in contemporary hardcore cinema cf. Purcell 2012, 139). An inverted power relation, a male lethally penetrated by a female, will be discussed later (Fig. 8.11).

Quite explicit sadomasochistic phantasies, albeit without a fatal ending, could be staged by means of Eros or Cupid, love incarnate (gendered male), and Psyche, soul incarnate (gendered female). The power relationship of these two was a bit more ambiguous than in the previous cases: Eros, love incarnate, was not only a supreme force but also, according to myth, the son of Venus. Psyche was clearly of more humble origin, a mortal princess who was finally deified. But being an allegory of the human soul, she was ascribed considerable power and importance, too. This may be the reason why the hierarchy between her and Eros could sometimes be turned upside down in the images. Depictions of Eros and Psyche (Icard-Gianoglio 1994, 574–578) could be used to illustrate a well-known love story (cf. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* 4.28–6.24) and also as an allegory of the powerful torment that love inflicts upon the soul. In the latter sense, Eros as well as Psyche could be duplicated at will in one and the same image. Sometimes, it is left open to the viewer to identify these figures (or at least two of them) with the protagonists of Apuleius or not. Both reasons, the story of Apuleius and the allegorical use, placed these images within a context of literature and learning and thus provided them with a legitimate context (see below). A mosaic from ancient Antioch (Icard-Gianoglio 1994, 574 no. 69) provides an allegory of love governing the human souls (Fig. 8.3).

A winged Eros, standing upright, has taken the reigns of a boat composed of the butterfly-like wings of two swimming Psyches. Horizontal lines indicate the sea. Both Psyches are completely naked. Harnessed like animals, they are forced to obey to Eros’ commands, like female actors in hardcore cinema are in relation to the male actor (cf. e.g. Purcell 2012, 113–115). Other Late Antique images depict Eros torturing a half-naked Psyche by means of a burning torch (e.g. Icard-Gianoglio 1994, 577 no. 104). They could have symbolised love burning one’s soul. Was this considered pornographic by an ancient viewer? By modern viewers, it is: The “*Playboy*” magazine, for example, represented in one of its issues a chained naked woman

whose vagina is burned by laser beams (discussed by Dworkin 1979, 138–142). Some Late Antique images depict Eros targeting an arrow at Psyche's breast (e.g. Icard-Gianoglio 1994, 577 no. 103) – an allegory of love wounding one's heart. Similar images of female surrender, albeit not depicting the figure of Psyche, were employed in rituals of erotic magic. A magical papyrus from the 4th century (PGM 4.296–466) prescribes: “make the male [figure out of wax or clay] in the form of Ares fully armed, holding a sword in his left hand and threatening to plunge it into the right side of her neck. And make her with her arms behind her back and down on her knees” (Stratton 2007, 81). Some images even depict Eros burning Psyche alive – which could be interpreted as love's power to burn one's soul and destroy it. In the latter scenes, Psyche is always rendered in the shape of a butterfly, not of a maiden. The iconographic formula of a girl-shaped Psyche being burnt alive was apparently considered too cruel for the purpose. In modern pornography, too, the motif of burning a female human alive is only to be found in the works of de Sade or the like (cf. Dworkin 1979, 71. 92–93). Thus, on the very left of a Roman sarcophagus (Blanc and Gury 1986, 970 no. 103), a weeping Eros extends his right hand and exposes a Psyche-butterfly to the flame of an altar (Fig. 8.4).



Figure 8.3. Floor mosaic: Eros and two Psyches. 3rd century CE. Antakya, Museum 846 (after Levi 1947, Pl. 37b).



Figure 8.4. Roman sarcophagus (detail): Weeping Eros burns a butterfly meant to be Psyche, Eros and Psyche embracing. 200–225 CE. Ostia, Museum 1177. (D-DAI-ROM-67.660 by Singer)

But this is not the end of the story. Later on, we will discuss images of an inverted power relationship, of Psyche handcuffing and torturing Eros, and finally, images of the happy ending, the more or less naked couple embracing one another ardently (cf. the couple on the right of Fig. 8.4), getting married, and, as Apuleius ends his story, having a daughter called Voluptas, “Pleasure”.

The last example of a girl as victim of male violence is the least typical. It is the exception that proves the rule. The image, depicted on an Antioch mosaic, is unique (de Bellefonds 1990, 719 no. 37): A girl dressed fully in white, only leaving her face for the viewer to see, is brought forward by a grown woman towards a man in a costume that – according to the conventions of ancient drama – specifies a mythical king. As the girl’s dress can be perceived as specifying a bride (cf. Clarke 2013, 149–150, Fig. 8.4), the scene is interpreted as relating to Euripides’ *Iphigenia at Aulis*: The wrath of Artemis prevents the Achaean fleet from sailing to Troy, and the only way to appease the goddess is to sacrifice the leader’s, i.e. Agamemnon’s, daughter. Agamemnon thus sends for his wife Clytemnestra and his daughter Iphigenia, under the pretext of planning to marry off Iphigenia to Achilles, and finally has her slaughtered on an altar. The image probably depicts the instant before the actual sacrifice (Fig. 8.5).



Figure 8.5. Floor mosaic: Iphigenia, her mother, and Agamemnon. Late 3rd century CE. Antakya, Museum 961 (after Levi 1947, Pl. 22).

Clytemnestra conducts her daughter towards Agamemnon who is going to tell them his fatal decision. Contrarily to the images seen before, there is no depiction of violence. Instead, the mosaic focuses on the moments before the lethal and bloody act: on the emotional relations between the members of that notoriously dysfunctional family, especially on the relation between father, the future perpetrator, and daughter, the future victim. Agamemnon, the father,

is not explicitly depicted as slaughtering his daughter. There is also no depiction of naked skin in the case of Iphigenia, no explicit sexualisation of her body. Her virginal beauty is alluded to only by means of veiling it. This, too, may be due to the fact that the relationship of male murderer and female victim is simultaneously one of father and daughter, and that incest was strictly out of bounds in Late Antique art and society. To sum up: Agamemnon is Iphigenia's father. This fact ensures his power and superiority over her, but, at the same time, makes his action highly problematic. Even more problematic would have been a sexual connotation of the deed.

Girls as victims of animal violence

When animals attack a girl in Late Antique images, they often do so as agents of an anthropomorphic male. In most cases, this male is an Olympian god while the victim is a minor deity or a mortal. Thus, status is observed, here too. On various Late Antique monuments (cf. Palagia 1986), we find the well-known story (e.g. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

1.452–567; cf. Richlin 1992b, 162) of Daphne, a Naiad. Daphne's maiden beauty attracted the attention of Apollo who started to pursue her. In order to escape rape, the fleeing girl prayed to her father, a river god, to transform her alluring female shape, and hence was transformed into a laurel tree. Thus, the refusal of her higher-in-hierarchy would-be rapist is paid with the end of Daphne's human existence. Her female shape is annihilated, destroyed. This fact comes close to a remark by Natalie Purcell (2012, 124) on modern hardcore cinema: "Pornographers and their fans consistently use words like 'demolish', 'destroy', 'violate', and 'wreck' to describe what happens to women's bodies in pornography." Daphne's transformation into a tree can also be considered as a kind of death. In the words of Dworkin (1979, 174): "Death is the stunning essence of sex." Consequently, at least one image (Palagia 1986, 346 no. 29) depicts the sexually frustrated god as he draws an arrow from his quiver, ready to shoot at the transforming naked maiden. An ivory relief (Palagia 1986, 347 no. 35) centres on the moment when Daphne's transformation starts and Apollo's pursuit comes to an abrupt end (Fig. 8.6).

The god – kithara in hands and fully naked – looks with amazement at an equally naked Daphne already surrounded by a trunk and by laurel branches. A little Eros above his head symbolises his frustrated erotic desire. In this case, the god executes his aggression via an animal sacred to him, the swan: coming from above in full flight, the huge bird bites into the trunk, into the spot where

Daphne's feet would have been.



Figure 8.6. Ivory relief: Apollo, his swan, and Daphne transforming. 6th century CE. Ravenna, Museo Nazionale 1001 (after Duthuit et al., 1933, Pl. 23a).

The phallic implications of a swan's head and beak are even more evident in images of Leda and the swan. Leda, the newly wed queen of Sparta, was seduced by Zeus in the guise of a swan (e.g. *Anthologia Palatina* 5.307; Hyginus, *Fables* 77). As she had sex with her husband the same night, the resulting offspring was half-mortal and half-divine. One of this popular topic's most explicit depictions can be seen on a Coptic limestone relief (de Bellefonds 1992, 237 no. 52). The sculptor presented Leda, clad with nothing but a flimsy shawl, in a three quarter-view of the backside (Fig. 8.7).

Leda's left hand reaches backward, touching gently the neck of a swan, i.e. Zeus in disguise. The animal, in turn, touches her lower leg with his foot and sticks his beak into Leda's bottom cleft, suggesting anal intercourse. Heterosexual anal intercourse, though only rarely depicted in late antique art (e.g. on 3rd- and 4th-century terracotta

lamps: Böttger 2002, 140–141 nos. 1077–1129 pls. 24–25), is a very popular motif in today hardcore cinema (Purcell 2012, 132–133). The more conventional type of female–swan intercourse, however, was Leda lying on her back and the animal between her legs, kissing her lips or her breasts with his beak. This formula can be found, for instance, on various gems destined as private gifts (Molesworth and Henig 2011, esp. 179 pl. 2; cf. Sena Chiesa 2011, 234–236).



Figure 8.7. Limestone relief: Zeus as swan, and Leda. C. 400 CE. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum AN 1970.403. (© Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)

Aggression is never as clearly stated as in the case of Daphne and Apollo. Rather, the images' focus oscillates between hardcore pornography and tenderness. Compare, for example, the peaceful image on a 4th-century ivory plaque (Robertson 1988, 78 no. 21) showing Zeus in the guise of a bull, gently embraced by the young – and ignorant – Princess Europa, whom he is going to abduct (Fig. 8.8). And even the encounter of Daphne and Apollo could be presented in a deceptively harmonious way (Molesworth and Henig 2011, 180 pl. 3).

Another set of mythological images presents an Olympian deity with his or her hierarchically stratified retinue made of anthropomorphic, semi-anthropomorphic and fully beastly figures. At the retinue's bottom, a tiny female figure is sometimes being harassed by huge animals that belong to a higher status themselves or at least to individuals of higher status. This Roman sarcophagus (Fig. 8.9), like many others, is decorated with the topic of Venus Marina, Venus as Mistress of the Sea, and her retinue (Rumpf 1939, 28 no. 72).

Taking centre is a portrait of the deceased woman in a conch, aligning her with Venus and thus granting her the position that is

otherwise occupied by the goddess herself. The conch is held upright by two sea-centaurs (hybrids made of man, horse, and sea-snake) who carry on their back each a Nereid, a beautiful and half-naked sea nymph. Two more Nereids are represented as swimming toward the sarcophagus' corners, embracing sea-bulls. Above, there are two little Erotes; below, one can discern some more hybrid sea-animals. Placed right under the central conch is a tiny naked female figure with stringy hair. Brandishing a rudder, she defends herself rather clumsily against two attacking sea-creatures, a bull and a ram. Additionally, she is threatened by the enormous hooves of the sea-centaurs. On other sarcophagi, these attacks can be rendered explicitly sexual: a sea-dragon snatches at the female's genitals (Rumpf 1939, 29–30 no. 74) or at her breast (Sichtermann 1970, 226–228 no. 5). These images are conceived as rape fantasies. The victim is a clumsy and scruffy mermaid and as such literally and metaphorically at the very bottom of this marine society. The depiction's pornographic character is in accordance with pornography's basic meaning, as summed up by Dworkin (1979, 199): "The word *pornography*, derived from the ancient Greek *pornē* and *graphos*, means 'writing about whores'. *Pornē* means 'whore', specifically and exclusively the lowest class of whore". This lowest-class whore belongs to a completely other stratum than the elegant, well-groomed Nereids or as Venus/the deceased who, themselves, are all fully in control of the male hybrids and beasts. Accordingly, there is neither help nor female solidarity for the victim. The higher strata of this marine society just go on with their own happy business, without even looking at what is happening below.





Figure 8.9. Roman sarcophagus (detail): The retinue of marine Venus. 220/230 CE. Paris, Louvre Ma 396 (after Rumpf 1939, Pl. 25 no. 72).

The hybrids and beasts, in this case, are not agents of a male aggressor, but act on their own behalf. Despite the fact that they are more beastly and less human than the female figure – and therefore, from an ontological point of view, should be of lower status – the higher status is theirs. This is made explicit by two means: First, by their larger size that in Late Antiquity almost always connotes enlarged importance (“Bedeutungsgröße” in German, cf. Raeck 1992, 22); and second, by the fact that they belong to Venus’s marine retinue whereas the female figure does not. Probably, these male beasts also helped to represent the ancient viewpoint that the sexuality of all males is to a certain degree beastlike, that there is a “beast within” (cf. the title of Salisbury 2011).

This category’s last specimen is a limestone relief tondo (Nauerth and Warns 1981, 31–34) depicting the legend of Saint Thecla. As told in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Thecla was a noble Roman virgin. When she heard Saint Paul preaching of virginity, she decided to leave her mother and fiancé and to follow Paul as a disciple. In consequence, she suffered various persecutions but was always miraculously rescued (cf. Streete 2009, 73–102). The sculptor chose one of the most dramatic moments of Thecla’s trials: when she was sentenced to be eaten by wild animals because she had refused and assaulted a local nobleman (Fig. 8.10). As in Daphne’s case, refusal of a higher ranking would-be rapist has to be paid with the refusing maiden’s annihilation. The animals, therefore, act as the agents of the

male aggressor and punish the intractable female on his behalf. Like any human-shaped executioner, these animals are agents of the law and so, ultimately, of the emperor and the state.

Thecla stands upright in the tondo's centre, looking frontally at the viewer, head framed by a halo that singles her out. Thecla's hands are bound behind her back, her ankles are bound, too. Contrarily to what is told in the Acts (33), she has not been stripped naked but wears a long skirt. Her bare upper body has been subjected to skilful bondage: there are ropes around her neck, her waist, and her breasts. Two more ropes tie Thecla to a lion and a lioness – the animals supposed to enforce the death sentence. Two angels hovering above, however, assure the viewer that there will be a happy ending: On God's command, the lioness will fight off the other beasts, and after some more miracles, Thecla will be pardoned.



Figure 8.10. Limestone tondo: Saint Thecla and lions. 5th century CE. Kansas City (MO), The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 48–10. (Jamison Miller)

Compared to the images discussed above, there are both

similarities and differences. As usual, the female victim of beastly violence is clearly sexualised. This is in accordance to recent research (e.g. Streete 2009) that often, and correctly so, centres on the sexualisation and objectification of the Late Antique female martyr's body. Here, the sexualisation is mainly achieved by the depiction of bondage. Does this mean that in Late Antiquity, bondage was as charged with sexual meaning, as it is today in sadomasochism-practices (Purcell 2012, 195–197) or pornographic images (cf. e.g. Dworkin 1981, 138–139)? As with so many points mentioned above, this, too, would require further investigation. As to the animals, they – at least in the beginning – function in their most usual way, as agents of a male perpetrator. But then the lioness changes allegiance. The she-animal now acts as an agent of God who, in Late Antique Christian thinking, is much higher in hierarchy than a provincial Roman governor and can therefore impede the governor's plans with ease. Why only the female lion is chosen as a divine token, and not the other beasts, is difficult to decide. Because she is a female like the maiden martyr herself and thus more inclined to show solidarity? Especially for a high born, noble maiden like Thecla? (Compare the solidarity of the human female spectators in the story, too: e.g. *Acts* 27, and Streete 2009, 87). Because according to the Late Antique mind, males – beastly or human – regard females first of all as prey, not as someone who needs assistance? As to Thecla: Unlike most female victims of male sexual aggression discussed before, she is finally rescued from her male aggressor because she had been smart enough to ally herself with the ultimate authority, the Christian god. Daphne, for her part, had had only a pagan river god to pray to – hence the far less pleasant mode of escape that was open to her. Thecla's trial serves as a *martyrium* in the literal sense, a testimony of God's power. This limestone relief is an image of suffering turning into triumph, as it can be observed also in the Late Antique depictions of Christ crucified (Moraw 2008a, 130–132).

Girls as perpetrators of male–female violence

In this category, the gender hierarchy is turned upside-down: Some, though not too many, images depict victorious females that kill one or more male figures. The killing can either be achieved by brute, direct force – imagined only rarely, because of females' comparatively lesser physical strength – or in a more devious way. In all instances, however, the perpetrators are of higher status than their victims, a feature already known by now, so the assessment is far less

unambiguous than in the previous cases. Rather, the female perpetrators are often considered highly problematic.

Let us begin with the only non-problematic case. A victorious female by definition is Victoria, the Roman state goddess of victory (cf. Moraw in press). On an ivory relief (Vollkommer 1997, 266 no. 361) she is depicted killing a Germanic warrior, an enemy of the Roman Empire, with a lance (Fig. 8.11). The man has sunk to the ground and pleads for mercy. Nevertheless, the maiden goddess grasps his hair brutally and thrusts his breast with her weapon. A second man, probably already taken captive, is standing stock-still in the background. As often (for sexualized dress in earlier depictions cf. Kousser 2006), Victoria wears a long, sleeveless robe whose fine fabric reveals more of her body than it conceals. An articulate sexualisation of the Roman goddess of victory can also be observed in Late Antique literature, e.g. in Prudentius, *Against Symmachus* 2.31–38. In the formulation of Alan Cameron (2011, 343): “he [= Prudentius] makes rather puerile fun of the idea of a winged maiden directing the weapons of panting soldiers [i.e. the Roman soldiers killing barbarians].” The act of killing itself was not considered problematic because from a Roman point of view, any barbarian who had stood up against Rome deserved death (cf. Dillon and Welch 2006, esp. 11–12). Victoria, the maiden goddess, has assumed the masculine role of the Roman soldier, while the barbarian, in turn, is effeminate and, in consequence, lethally penetrated by Victoria’s lance. Here, the gendered power relationship of penetrator and penetrated, as maintained in the image of Solomon killing Lilith (Fig. 8.2), is turned upside down. That means, in order to readjust this power relationship, the gender of the protagonists has to be switched. The same goes for modern pornography as observed by Dworkin (1979, 23): “Fucking requires that the male act on one who has less power and this valuation is so deep, so completely implicit in the act, that the one who is fucked is stigmatized as feminine during the act even when not anatomically female.” A “male” Victoria killing a “female” barbarian was fully in accordance with a Roman viewer’s mind.



Figure 8.11. Ivory relief: Victoria killing a barbarian. Mid-5th century CE. Hamburg, Staatsbibliothek (after Delbrueck 1929, Pl. N 46).

A bit more problematic is the following example, from Graeco-Roman myth: Scylla, the female sea monster, is killing Odysseus' companions, as told by Homer (*Odyssey*

12.223–259). Contrary to the description given of her by the poet, Scylla the monster had always been rendered by Antique artists in a rather sexualised way (Hopman 2012, 91–172), as a hybrid of beautiful maiden, fish, and dogs. A contorniate (Alföldi and Alföldi 1976, 8 no. 27.4) depicts her as approaching from the right: A monstrous figure with head and naked upper body of a young female, with voracious dogs growing out of her waist, and with fish tails

instead of legs (Fig. 8.12).

On the left, there is the bow of Odysseus's ship, with the hero brandishing a lance in his vain attempt to fight off the monster. Unimpressed, Scylla grasps the head of the companion in front of Odysseus. She will throw the unfortunate man overboard, like the three tiny figures that are already in the water, and devour him. The actual devouring is done by the dogs that stem from Scylla's waist. In ancient thought, Scylla's dogs were equated with the maiden's voracious vagina (cf. Fulgentius, *Mitologiarum libri tres* 2.9 ed. Helm 1898). "Dogs were considered to typify shamelessness of all sorts ... Scylla, thus monstrously shaped, was easily represented as symbolising inguinal vice, *uitium inguinis*" (Lyne 1978, 131). In this depiction, Odysseus's companions are not only killed but emasculated: by a monstrous female that usurps the active masculine role.



Figure 8.12. Contorniate: Scylla attacking the ship and men of Odysseus. 395–423 CE. Berlin, Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen, Objekt Nummer 18206978. (Reinhard Saczewski)

Like in the case of Thecla and the lions (Fig. 8.10), the beasts are supposed to do the actual killing. Unlike in Thecla's case, however, they will succeed: Odysseus's companions are too low in mythical hierarchy to survive. Their death is nothing that would have troubled an ancient viewer. Survival is only granted to the hero, Odysseus. He has been carefully rendered in a way that does not make his failure – and a failure it was (cf. Hopman 2012, 23–41) – too obvious. Unlike his minute and naked companions, Odysseus maintains his masculinity, standing tall and upright in full armour.

With the next example, we return to the story of Eros and Psyche.

Sometimes, Late Antique artists expressed the idea of Psyche, as allegory of the soul, tormenting Eros, love incarnate. This torment was thought to be a punishment for the pains that love had inflicted upon the souls. The inverted power relationship is rendered on another Roman sarcophagus (Icard-Gianoglio 1994, 578 no. 119). In its centre, Eros – standing on a podium, hands tied – is tortured by three Psyches: the one in front of him closes in with a burning torch and the one behind with a huge bough, probably used as a birch; the third Psyche kneels in front of a burning altar (Fig. 8.13).

Unlike in the cases of female violence seen before (Fig. 8.11 and Fig. 8.12), however, this one will not end with the male victim's death. Instead, the sculptor presented to the viewers the happy ending: On the sarcophagus' right, another Psyche kneels in front of a huge Eros, looking at him with awe and affection. Here, gender hierarchy is readjusted. On the left, a Psyche and an Eros embrace tenderly, as on the sarcophagus discussed above (Fig. 8.4). Marriage, the purpose of any nubile maiden, is just a step away (depictions of marriage between Eros and Psyche: Icard-Gianoglio 1994, 582–583 nos. 164–165). While looking at the sarcophagus, the ancient viewer was free to identify the figures depicted as either the protagonists of Apuleius' story (especially in those scenes that rendered only one Eros and one Psyche) or (especially when there was more than one Psyche or more than one Eros) simply as allegories of the eternal and undecided battle between the power of love and the soul.



Figure 8.13. Roman sarcophagus: Stories about Eros and Psyche(s). 4th century CE. Rome, S. Agnese fuori le mura (after *Archaeologia Classica*, Vol. 24, 1972, Pl. 27.2).

More than once, a maiden perpetrator does not use physical violence to destroy a man. She resorts to more devious means instead. One of the most infamous examples of a *femme fatale*, a “fatal woman” (or, in this instance: girl), is the biblical figure Salome. Salome, as told

by Gospel of Mark (6, 21–29; who, however, does not name her), was the maiden daughter of Herodias, wife of King Herod. Salome danced before Herod at the occasion of his birthday and, as the king was so pleased by the performance, was granted by him under oath any wish he could fulfil. At the instigation of her mother, Salome asked for the head of the imprisoned John the Baptist. In an illuminated Greek Gospel book, the so-called Sinope Gospels, one can see Salome's wish have come true (Fig. 8.14).

Herod's birthday feast is rendered in the iconographic conventions of a Late Antique banquet, with the banqueters resting on a semi-circular couch (Dunbabin 2003, 199). The banqueter on the left, with diadem, is King Herod. Salome, also with diadem, is standing in front of the couch. She wears an elaborate diaphanous dress and lots of jewellery. Her skin is very white. This way, the painter distinguished her as the deadly alluring girl that made Herod swear his foolish oath. From the right, she is approached by a servant who, according to the conventions of banquet scenes, is serving a huge dish. The truly unconventional feature is the Baptist's severed head that is lying in the vessel. This feature turns the banquet into a perverted one, the banqueters and the princess into monsters. Furthermore, the power relationship between perpetrator and victim is a complex one. At first glance Salome, the perpetrator, is the one with higher status (i.e. stepdaughter of the king vs. commoner) and more power (i.e. in possession of a beautiful body that makes men doing her wishes vs. helpless prisoner) and as such, her deed could be eventually justified. At a closer look, however, it is just the other way around: John the Baptist is God's chosen prophet and attacking him means attacking God himself. Thus, Salome, her mother, and Herod are sinners who will be punished by God accordingly, as any viewer of the illuminated Gospel was convinced. Furthermore, and more gender-specific: John had had power over others by his preaching, his *logos*, while Salome had to resort to her body for getting what she wanted. The antagonism of *logos* (*psyche*, *nous* respectively = mind, spirit) and *soma* (= body, matter) was well known in antiquity. The former was valued much higher, and, not surprisingly, connoted male, while the latter was connoted female (e.g. Aristotle, *Politics* 1254b2–16; cf. Parker 1992, 102 and note no. 32).



Figure 8.14. *Illuminated Gospel (Codex Sinopensis), fol. 10v (detail): Salome with the head of John the Baptist. Mid-6th century CE. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Suppl. Gr. 1286 (after Grabar 1948, Pl. 1).*

The following scene on a silver plate (Toynbee and Painter, 1986: 32 no. 24), taken from myth, will also display complex power relationships. Its underlying topic is, too, the perversion of a reputable institution due to the actions of a maiden (Fig. 8.15).

The scene takes place in the Achaean camp at Troy, after the death of Achilles. A seated Athena (in the centre) has to decide to whom Achilles' famous armour (below her feet) shall be given as a price: to Ajax (the tall man on the left) or to Odysseus (the tiny one on the right)? As has been demonstrated elsewhere (Moraw, 2008b), the silver smith made perfectly clear to whom the price should belong: Ajax is singled out by iconography and composition, he is unambiguously Odysseus's superior. Nevertheless Athena, the maiden goddess of wisdom, favours Odysseus because he is the most prudent of all Greek heroes. Accordingly, she will give the armour to him and thus drive disappointed Ajax into suicide. Athena is characterised as an unjust and biased judge who brings death upon a brave and blameless man. Her judgment hence is a perverted one. Like in Salome's case, the question of status and power relationship is rather complex: Athena is an Olympian goddess and as such higher in hierarchy than the mortal heroes Ajax and Odysseus. From this stems her right to judge them. By the time this silver dish was made, however, nobody believed in the Olympian gods any more (cf. Cameron 2011). For the Christian elite viewer of this silver plate, Athena was just a figure of educated learning, of *paideia* (Moraw in press), not one that inspired religious awe. As such, her negative qualities, inherent to more or less all Graeco-Roman deities (cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, or Homer, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), could be condemned

without fear. This lack of awe or fear is probably also the reason for the rather sexualised way that Athena's body is displayed for the viewer: her abdomen, navel, and legs are clearly visible underneath her dress. Ajax, on the other side, is not only a man – what gives him a certain per se superiority in Late Antique thinking, but the way he is rendered by the artist, he is even an exemplary Late Antique man: brave, strong, noble, and self-possessed. As such, Ajax is not only morally superior to Odysseus. He is, most of all, morally superior to Athena, the female responsible for his death.



Figure 8.15. Silver plate: Athena causing the death of Ajax. 6th century CE. St. Petersburg, The Ermitage 279, Otdel Vostoka (The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg).

Girls in female–female violence

No Late Antique images of lethal violence between female protagonists are known. Apparently, topics that had been popular in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD – like the killing of Niobe's seven daughters by an angry Artemis (cf. Geominy 1992, 920–922) – were no longer of interest for the viewer. Maybe there have been Late Antique illuminated codices of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, "The battle for the soul of man", though the oldest copies known today stem from

the 9th and 10th century (Ladner 1996, 174–176 fig. 114). Prudentius rendered personifications of moral qualities, of virtues and vices, fighting for the possession of the soul (Lamberton 1989, 145–148). As all of these qualities are gendered female in Latin and female personifications are as a rule imagined as grown up girls, the allegory depicts maiden warriors that battle fiercely until death.

A Roman sarcophagus (Wegner 1966, 31–32 no. 61) depicts, at least, brutal violence as the outcome of a music contest between Muses and Sirens (Fig. 8.16). “For the story goes that the daughters of Achelous [the Sirens] were persuaded by Hera to compete with the Muses in singing. The Muses won, plucked out the Sirens’ feathers (so they say) and made crowns for themselves out of them” (Pausanias 9.34.3, translation W. H. S. Jones 1965).

On the very left, the sculptor placed the Olympian gods Zeus (sitting), Athena (left) and Hera (right) who are supposed to oversee the contest. The contest takes place in the very centre: Three grotesque hybrid creatures of maiden and bird, the Sirens, attempt to sing, to play the flutes, and to play the kithara. The Muses – beautiful, youthful goddesses with carefully groomed hairstyles and elegant dresses – will defeat them with ease. In their hair, the viewer can already observe the Sirens’ feathers that indicate victory. On the right, this victory is acted out brutally: after having taken off the Sirens’ clothes, the victorious Muses knock the losers to the ground and whip their naked flesh.



Figure 8.16. Roman sarcophagus: Music contest between Muses and Sirens, Muses punishing Sirens. 225–250 CE. New York, Metropolitan Museum 7.10.104 (after Cumont, 1942, Pl. 35.1).

The power relationship in this image is unambiguous: The Muses, daughters of Zeus and the goddess Mnemosyne, are well-reputed goddesses related to knowledge and the arts. As such, they are not only of much higher status than the half-beastly Sirens, they can also count on the support of the Olympian gods who act as judges. For an ancient viewer, their victory is well-deserved – as is the punishment of the losers. When the satyr Marsyas was so unwise to challenge Olympian Apollo to a music contest, he not only lost, but was flayed

alive by the victorious god as punishment for his hubris (Hyginus, *Fables* 165). The Sirens, for their part, are not killed. They are, however, badly hurt and humiliated, in a way that sexualises their maltreatment. Even the Muses who do the whipping are slightly sexualised: see especially the second Muse from the right, with the bare left shoulder, an iconographic motif denoting beauty and seduction (Schade 2003, 134). Was this image intended by the Late Antique sculptor as a lesbian sadomasochistic fantasy? As something that can be compared to modern pornographic images like those described by Dworkin (1979, 129–133, cf. 126–127)? And for whom was this fantasy staged? Given the fact that at least the ideal (though not always the actual) viewer of this sarcophagus was male, this scene was staged for a man. The same question can be asked for modern images that depict lesbian sex, both sadomasochistic and not. Some would be inclined to posit an exclusively male audience, cf. Andrea Dworkin (1979, 47): “The photograph is the ultimate tribute to male power: the male is not in the room, yet the women are there for his pleasure.” But, as Gayle Rubin made clear (1999, esp. 166–167), it is likewise possible to posit a female, lesbian viewer who enjoys looking at depictions of all-female sadomasochistic sex. The same may be true of Late Antique women who looked at the sarcophagus.

Conclusion

This is a first attempt at compiling and interpreting Late Antique images that deal with girls and violence. It is part of the author’s projected book about girls in Late Antiquity. Assuming that the selection given above is approximately representative, we can conclude that there were much more images that depicted girls as victims of violence than images that depicted them as perpetrators. Examples included Hippolyta, Lilith, and Iphigenia killed by a man; Psyche tortured by Eros; Daphne, Leda, and Europa (almost) raped by an Olympian god; a tiny sea-maiden molested by huge sea-monsters; Saint Thecla almost killed by wild beasts; the Sirens stripped naked and whipped. The rarer cases with girls as perpetrators can be divided into two subcategories. First, the female protagonist is acting as executrix of and in accordance with a world view that is generally accepted. Examples were Victoria killing an enemy of the Roman state and the Muses punishing the hubris of the Sirens. Second, and more often, the female protagonist is acting *against* the norms of society and thus considered slightly, if not highly, problematic. Examples included

Scylla devouring the companions of Odysseus; Salome causing John the Baptist's decapitation; Athena provoking Ajax's suicide. A special case is Psyche torturing Eros: first, because unlike most other victims of female violence Eros is not killed; and second, because, the roles of perpetrator and victim are convertible and they end up as a happily married couple. This is due to the fact that basically, depictions of Eros and Psyche are allegories of the eternal – and principally undecided – battle between the power of love and the soul. As a first, and not very surprising, result it can be stated that Late Antique viewers and artists regarded girls' victimisation as the norm, not girls' agency. Girls' agency needed a strong legitimisation. Otherwise, it was considered suspect.

A second result is in how complex a way gender, status, and power are interwoven in these images. In almost all cases of violence against a girl, the perpetrator is ascribed an explicitly higher status than is his victim, apart from the fact that he is male and she is not. This goes for Heracles as well as for Solomon, Apollo, Zeus, and even for the huge sea-animals. If this clear-cut status difference is lacking, the iconographic pattern will change. The special case of Eros and Psyche was already mentioned above; the slaughter of Iphigenia by her own father could only be alluded at; Saint Thecla is threatened by the beasts, but will be divinely rescued. Thus, violence against a girl was only acceptable to the Late Antique mind when the victim belonged to a lower social stratum than the perpetrator. Even more problematic was girl as perpetrator. Victoria and the Muses act not only in accordance with the norms of Late Antique society; they are also, and without any doubt, of higher status than their victims. These are the rare cases when maiden violence seemed acceptable. Scylla, however, is a monster and thus ontologically and ethically inferior to her human victims, despite her superior physical strength. In a similar way, Salome is inferior to John the Baptist, despite her status as princess and her power over Herod. And Athena, though ontologically superior and much more powerful than Ajax, is nevertheless his moral inferior. All these considerations delegitimised the deeds of the maidens in question. In art, this lack of legitimacy was made evident by means of iconography, which is overall composition and characterization of the protagonists.

Almost all assaults upon girls that have been discussed here are strongly sexualised. Some are simply rendered as rape or attempted rape, as with Daphne, Leda, Europa, and the tiny sea-maiden. Others are rendered as sexualised torture, as with Psyche and the Sirens. And even depictions of murder or execution present the victim naked

(Lilith), half-naked (Saint Thecla) or at least in a sexualised pose (Hippolyta). The exception that proves the rule is Iphigenia. In order to avoid connotations of incest in portraying Agamemnon's deed, his victim is depicted fully clothed. Maiden perpetrators are sexualised, too. This can be done in a more discreet way, by rendering the female dress diaphanous – as with Victoria, Psyche, Salome, Athena – or slightly disarrayed, as with the Muses. But it can also be done in a rather explicit way, as with Scylla and her naked upper body. All this is not according to the norms of Late Antique female attire, as recent research on real-life female dress makes clear (Schade 2003; Parani 2007). Ideally, a Late Antique woman's or girl's body had to be concealed as much as possible.

This observation leads to the last point, pornography. It could be proven that many of the ancient images involving girls and violence correspond with the modern feminist definition of pornography as the representation of females in a sexualising and objectifying way. Even some of the motifs depicted are comparable: sexualised murder (as in the case of Hippolyta); penetration by a weapon as symbolic phallus (Lilith); annihilation of the female body (Daphne); sexualised torture as burning (Psyche) or whipping (Sirens); harnessing (Psyches) and bondage (Thecla); attacks alluding to rape (tiny mermaid); anal intercourse (Leda). As Late Antique society was a strictly patriarchal one, this does not come as a surprise. Equally unsurprising is the fact that almost all of these images need a male participant for their pornographic effect. What Andrea Dworkin (1979, 23) stated for modern pornography goes as well for late antique depictions: "Sex, a word potentially so inclusive and evocative, is whittled down by the male so that, in fact, it means penile intromission ... Sex is defined in action only by what the male does with his penis". This last sentence can pass for antiquity's definition of sex, too, as Michel Foucault's famous analysis of 4th-century BC texts (Foucault 1985) made clear. Female homoeroticism, on the contrary, was of only minor interest for the male Late Antique viewer, or rather did not count as sex at all, as Bernadette Brooten (1996) demonstrated.

As stated right at the beginning of this essay, girls from real life are almost absent in Late Antique images. Instead, we are presented with depictions like those discussed above. It has been suggested (e.g. Muth 1998) that Late Antique society tended toward a transfer of certain real life discourses – like on sexuality or on gender relations – to the world of myth and its pictorial representation. There, in a world safely remote, could be discussed and imagined things that would have been off-limits when related to actual life and actual persons. The same

may apply to the discourse on real Late Antique girls. All the ideas, fears, and fantasies that society had about their daughters were better expressed in the pictorial language of myth, biblical tales, and hagiography.

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Chapter 9

Heaven for me, hell for the “others”: An agenda on sex and body from Sassanid Persia

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Introduction

According to archaeological evidence and written sources, it is supposed that the Sassanid Empire (3rd–7th century AD) had a hierarchical worldview and was interested in controlling public and private domains (Daryaei, 2008, xvi). It seems that the Sassanid Empire invented social strategies to control aspects of social life, including sexuality. The present research investigates how the Sassanid power structure tried to influence or control the sexual life of ordinary people. Control of the body and sexual behaviours are historical facts in ancient societies as well as in modern ones, as Foucault (1990, 128–137) has shown so convincingly. Ancient Iran is no exception to Foucault’s argument. The main inquiry, here, is: what were the reasons for such “sexual control”? Was it connected to political domination, making the latter possible and easier to execute? Keeping in mind that technologies of power had not been developed to the extent we know them today, could top-down control and direct oppression in an ancient society with a pyramidal structure act as a mechanism for the reproduction of a sexual discipline? That is, was sex-control one of the means to integrate the subjects of the Sassanid polity?

The present chapter assesses the range and goals of structural sex-control in the Sassanid period via material culture and textual sources. The process of sex-control will be read in relation to religious

institutions, power structures and propaganda in order to assess the historical roots of sex-control from a contextual viewpoint. To create a contextual understanding of Sassanid sex-control, this chapter concentrates on the perception of religion and its interaction with power. It is supposed that religious Zoroastrian institutions were organised and were in a close relationship with the ruling class (Iyer 2009, 35). However, it seems that sex-control and propagated stereotypes can seriously influence individuality, identity and actions (see Canepa 2009, 2010). Therefore, the main theme of the present chapter is to investigate sexuality in Sassanid Iran, not as a personal issue, but as an identity aspect considered politically by dominant groups and the outcome of this.

Here, sex-control will be investigated as it touches on all aspects of sexual life, including sexual behaviours, desires and tendencies, which may interact with gender identity. It seems that sexual control was not necessarily tied to just one sexual demographic, but rather affected all sexual categories within Sassanid society.

The Sassanid Empire: socio-political structure

The Sassanid dynasty was one of the great empires of ancient Persia, dating from 224 to 651 AD (Frye 2001, 462–463). The beginning of the Sassanid period was the end of the 500-year-long reign of the Arsacid dynasty (Schippmann 1990, 15). The territory of the Sassanid Empire extended from Afghanistan in the East to Mesopotamia, parts of Anatolia and of Armenia in the West (Herrmann 1977, 128).

The Sassanids created a social order by dividing people into four groups (Daryyae 2009, 26–29), known as classes, based on occupation. The main four groups were: clergymen (“Moubadan”), military personnel (“Jangavaran”), administrative people (“Dabiran”) and ordinary people (“Vasterfeshiyount”) (Moftakhari *et al.* 2008, 7). This categorisation is gendered, based on masculinity, with no room for women. The Sassanids justified their ideal social order by ascribing it to Zoroastrian religion and institutionalising it in law (Karbasian and Zanjani 2005). “Magupats” were the clergy class of Sassanid society. “Judging, religious teaching and supervision of the performance of religious duties were the responsibility of Magupats” (Moobadan) (Karbasian and Zanjani 2005, 52). Zoroastrian institutions were supported by empire’s ruling class and Zoroastrianism (“Mazda parasti”) was the official religion of the empire (Tafazzoli 2007).

Within a vertical order, the four classes experienced different levels

of social status and rights. It is supposed that the majority of Sassanid commoners were generally the members of the fourth class, craftsmen. The “Letter of Tansar” points to the stability of this stratified order, showing that membership of each class was by inheritance (Minovi 1975, 140).

The investigation of Sassanid written sources, such as legal texts and inscriptions, and of material evidence, especially visual arts such as rock reliefs, shows that “Sasanian society was a lineage one that was based on patriarchy” (Christensen 1991, 29). The family was part of a bigger paternal unit, recognised as “tokhm-e”, “naf” and “gohar”, and could differ in size (Wiesehöfer 2001, 223). All family members, and especially women and children before puberty (“borna”), had to show obedience to the father or grandfather as the head of family (“salar”). All families forming a lineage respected their shared paternal ancestor. Patriarchy influenced all the social and political dimensions of Sassanid life and acted as an organising principle. Reflections of this system can be seen, for example in case of inheritance, succession, guardianship, names, document-registration and even gravestone inscriptions (Akbarzade and Tavousi 2006, 42–43, Gorg Yaraqi 1990, 34).

In such a system, the family was an important social unit, organising the social order of Sassanid society. Individuals’ sexual relations and orientations were closely tied to the family. Supported by juridical laws, religious instructions played an active role in this process. Sassanid “Pahlavi” literature (including all kinds of juridical, religious and Zoroastrian jurisprudence) shows a deep concern with sexuality, family, and marriage (see Shahzadi 2008). As Zoroastrian instructions were a recognised authority in case of sexuality, it can be supposed that religious minorities were treated roughly, inviting them to harsh punishment after death. It is supposed that they were sentenced in Sassanid courts, too. It seems that the target group of such considerations were mostly Sassanid society commoners, as some texts (Pourshariati 2008, 39, 407) and archaeological evidence point to the different nature of ruling-class sexual life: heaven for me, hell for the others? It seems that heaven, a symbol of perfect and joyful life, was created by and allocated to three prominent Sassanid classes, “mubadan”, warriors and “dabiran”, while the others, mostly ordinary people of the fourth class, were invited to hell, a symbol of darkness and pain, created in purpose of making people obedient to the Sassanid social order.

Archaeological evidence

The most recognised Sassanid material culture such as silver and golden plates and bowls are the products of royal workshops. It appears that the main consumers of these were the royal family and the elite classes. Therefore, there was an exclusive circle of production and consumption including the king and the noble classes. It is supposed that such a prestigious material culture was quite different from that of commoners, not only in material but also in meanings conveyed, in this case concerning sexual life (see Goratsievich Shapiro 1976, 104; Lukonin and Ivanov 2012, 14, 141).

There is little direct archaeological evidence of Sassanid sexual life. Representations of sexual organs or sexual relations are unusual in Sassanid art and material culture (see Ettinghausen 1972, 3–17). However, representations of the body and various bodily activities were very common, particularly in the case of the royal family, in what researchers recognise as visual art, mostly rock reliefs (Fig. 9.1). Representing the masculine body was an important part of Sassanid art (Mazdapour 2003, 803). What was displayed is an ideal form of the body, especially the masculine body. In these scenes, righteous men are involved in group activities which require a lot of bodily power and skill, such as hunting, battle and fighting.

Beside rock reliefs, metalwork and mosaics (Fig. 9.2) can be cited as considerable evidence on sexuality. This metalwork can be divided into two main groups, plates and pitchers (cups). Most of these are made of silver and gold and show a recognisable pattern, in that the main motif of pitchers is the feminine naked/semi-naked body. Semi-naked women are shown dancing or playing different kinds of music instruments, a tenuous fabric covering their naked bodies. In contrast, plates mostly present the dressed masculine powerful muscular body of the king performing activities such as hunting or fighting. Another kind of plates present the king and his queen sitting in private space on the throne (Dezhamkhooy 2012, 57–58) (Fig. 9.3).



Figure 9.1. God empowers Ardeshir the first, Naqsh-e Rostam Fars province (photo by Ali Roustaeeyanfard).

Sassanid palaces' mosaics display portraits of young ladies and men (in some cases elderly men). Women are shown playing music or making flower diadems, Bishapur royal palace's mosaics can be cited as a proper instance (Ghirshman 1962, figs 197–199). Women appear semi-naked with open clothes, their long dark hair is adorned precisely and there is an emphasis on breasts, thighs and hips. In contrary men are portrayed as heads and faces, and these portraits include some elderly men.

It seems that the relative absence of Sassanid sexual life in material culture, especially in visual arts, is somehow meaningful. It probably points to the private nature of sex in Sassanid society. Written sources confirm this. Given the relative silence of archaeological records, particularly those relating to everyday life of commoners, texts can be used as complementary evidence. Sassanid “Pahlavi” texts generally discuss sex in the context of crime, sin or legal questions (for example in describing sin scenes of a book called *Ardaviraf nameh*). Sassanid religious texts are full of discussions about sexual issues and instructions for organising it in form of heterosexuality and legal marriage.

A key issue in understanding the textual sources is that literature was an official tradition in Sassanid Iran. Inscriptions were produced by kings and in some exceptional cases by male clergy. It seems that texts were also ordered by power structure and produced by religious institutions. Hence, “Text production” was an intentional structural

exclusive act (Dezhamkhooy 2012, 155).



Figure 9.2. Bishapur - Mosaic figure (Ghirshman, 1954).

Inscriptions

“This is I, Son of Mazda, worshipping Lord Shapur, Iran and Aniran king of kings...” Naqsh-e Rostam inscription (Akbarzade and Tavousi 2006, 43).

There are 51 inscriptions studied here, of which 28 are related to graves (possibly of commoners) and the others are governmental (see Wilcox 1986). The first type, mostly inscriptions on women’s graves, point to husbands and fathers, named as legal caretakers.



Figure 9.3. Sassanid plate, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Accession Number 57.709 (Design by Ali Roustaeeyanfard).

The second group is mostly located in Fars province, Southwestern Iran. Fars acted as the capital of early Sassanid kings, Ardashir I and Shapur I, it remained an important province throughout Sassanid era. It includes an inscription on a monument, three on buildings, fifteen reliefs, two independent inscriptions and two memorial ones in Persepolis, an Achaemenid site. Most of these inscriptions are related to the royal family (Johnston, 2004, 428; Johnston 2007; Skaejaevro 1985, 598) and the king of kings. The inscriptions' structure is important in the Sassanid era, presenting the name of the father, male ancestors and the descriptions of men's activities. In both types, the emphasis falls on paternal ancestry.

Although there is no direct reference to sexual life, Sassanid inscriptions presents considerable information on the importance of family ties, legal marriage and patriarchy (Dezhamkhooy 2012, 59). People are recognised based on their fathers' and paternal ancestors' name and their marital status. Men are introduced by indicating the

name of their fathers, paternal ancestors and clans. The official title and career has also been cited in official inscriptions (Wisehofer 2001, 133). Married women are recognised under the name of their husbands. The pattern exists both in official royal inscriptions such as “Kabe-ye Zartosht” and unofficial ones such as grave stones (Dezhamkhooy 2012, 60).

Religious Texts

There are different kinds of religious sources, including jurisprudence, texts describing the other world, and books in the form of religious dialogues between Zoroastrian clergymen and clergymen from other religions.

Avesta

Avesta, the holy book of Zoroastrians is the most important Sassanid religious text. The book is intermingled with Persian legendary history and heroic tales. Like many other religious books, *Avesta* mentions legendary places and people. Based on its contents and style, it seems that it is the product of several different periods. Regarding its contents (such as the categories mentioned above) and the testimony of some “Pahlavi” texts such as “*Ardaviraf name*” and some inscriptions such as the “Kartir inscriptions” in Fars (Fig. 9.4), it appears that *Avesta* (or at least some parts of it) was collected in the Sassanid era. “Moubadan” (priests) played an important role in collecting *Avesta* in the mentioned era.



Factually, there is little direct reference to sexuality in *Avesta* but there is repeated emphasis on encouraging reproduction. The fifth chapter of *Avesta*, “Aban yasht”, indicated that “the goddess Anahid (Fig. 9.5) makes the sperm of men pure and the uterus of women clean and ready to fertility” (Razi 2000). The wish to have beautiful, powerful, warlike male children is repeated in numerous chapters of *Avesta* (Pourdavoud 1968, 351).

Another central point in *Avesta* is explaining the characteristics of an ideal woman for marriage “a young lady of good origin, loyal, reputable, good-natured, a good housekeeper, modest, who likes her father, ancestor and husband as her chief (‘salar’), yet beautiful and shapely. Such a lady is the best of women” (Razi 2000, 350). Such a definition emphasises beauty, which is an important factor in sex in the Persian context. It also reemphasises the family as a social unit, while giving clear points about the perceived ideal role of men as “salar” (chief) and women as “tars agah” (obedient). To obey men’s sexual desires is to accept one’s husband’s “salari” (superiority). The point has been discussed more clearly in *Ardaviraf name* chapters 62 to 64 (Amouzgar 2003, 81–82).



Figure 9.5. Goddess Anahid(?), Tang-e Ghandil Fars province (Photo by Ali Roustaeeyanfard).

Juridical texts

“People should practice sex only twice a week, a woman must obey her husband unless she is ill. Do not practice that more or less!” *Matikan* 20, chapter 92 (Shahzadi 2008, 92).

Basically, the nature of religious prescriptions and juridical laws reveal a deep coordination indicating serious attention to social subjects. Sassanid laws are full of everyday life issues, and many of these are sexual. The laws prescribe different behavioural patterns for young women and men including instructions for sexual life and sexual behaviour, but are usually silent about the elderly and children. It can however be suggested that personal, property, and criminal law even in early Islamic times often followed Sassanid principles.

Matikan-e hezar detestan is one of the most significant Sassanid juridical texts, including many judges' opinions presented in the form of juridical precedence. It should be mentioned that some parts of the book are missing. The interesting point about *Matikan* is that it includes eight chapters on family structure including sex. “*Matikan*” treats sex as a secondary issue overshadowed by marriage. Marriage itself is presented as an agreement necessary for maintaining the lineage. *Matikan* discusses different kinds of marriage, among them a kind of polyandry, where a man could lend his wife to another person under defined terms and conditions (Shaki 1992, 4). This does not signify freedom of sexual relations, but the marriage structure was flexible in order to insure the continuity of the family line: “the birth of a male successor was very important for all families” (Yarshater 2001, 47) reproduction was one of the main goals of matrimony and sex. Generally, to prevent women from reproduction was a big sin (Tafazzoli 1987, 214). The other kind of nominal marriage was one called “*Ivekin*”, in which a girl or woman got married only with the purpose of giving birth to a son to guarantee her father's successor.

Chapter seven of *Matikan* is allocated to “*Natars agahi*” (feminine disobedience) indicating that women must obey their husband as their chief (“*salar*”) including sexual conformity (Gorg Yaraqi 1990, 87). Women's disobedience legally was a crime and religiously a big sin. The most important matter was that a woman should not be without a warden. There is a discussion under the title of “*Khodsaray Zan*” in *Matikan*, which defended the women without warden who were the most inferior of women. A woman who refused marriage was condemned to death (“*Marg arzan*”) unlike a man in the same position (Shaki 1992; Mazdapour 1990, 128).

It should be emphasised that reproduction was proposed as the

most important function of sex (and even more important than sex per se). Therefore, juridical texts conform sexual relations to a lawful form, namely marriage, guaranteeing the continuity of family and paternal lineage. Legal texts regulated sexual activity, prescribing it was only a legitimate and legally supported action between married persons, for the purpose of reproduction.

The gendered [and sexual] perceptions of individuals provided by society can change with age (Sofaer Derevenski 2007, 1). Sexual behaviours are strongly influenced by individuals' age (Sofaer Derevenski 1997, 460). Children are considered sexually inactive, and as such only adults are addressed in juridical and religious texts (such as *Ardaviraf name*). In the few cases referring to children, gendered words such as girl and boy are unusual. Instead, a general word, "borna", is used for children. Children before puberty were treated as pure (probably because the absence of sexual desires) and were used in some religious ceremonies to restore purity in case of pollution (Mazdapour 1990, 156; Mazdapour 2003).

It seems that, contrary to the material culture discussed above, the main audience of these texts were commoners. Again, texts were generally produced by religious institutions to prescribe and regulate norms. But what kind of message did they give regarding sexuality?

First episode: Hell

Sex, sin and the other world phobia

"Viraz: I saw the spirit of a guilty man, a snake entering into his anus like an arrow, and exiting from his mouth. I asked Izad Azar and Soroush Ahlou about the man's guilt and they answered that his guilt is having sex with the other men" (*Ardaviraf name*, 1902: 86).

"A woman disobeying her salar (father) and not marrying deserves Marg Arzan (i.e. death)" (Shayest va Nashayest, 1990: 128).

A review of "Pahlavi" religious literature shows that parts of such texts portray the world of the afterlife. These are usually travel accounts describing heaven, hell, good ("ahlo") and evil ("darvand"), souls and their positions. Descriptions of the world of the afterlife reveal the social values, norms and anti-norms of Sassanid society. The narrators are usually "Moubadan" (priests). The spiritual journey of a "Moubad" (priest) and his observations of heaven and hell are the main focus. The most famous of these ones is *Ardaviraf*. Viraf/Viraz is

a “Moubad” accompanied by two Zoroastrian gods, Soroush and Azar in his journey. After coming back, he informs people about the other world. *Ardaviraf* portrays how those disobedient of Sassanid social values on sexual life (and other aspects of social life) experience severe physical punishments in the afterlife.

Investigating the content of such texts reveals that they are more closely linked to the Sassanid social order than to performing religious rites. It seems that the reflection of Sassanid ideal social order in religious texts signals the importance of such literature as a social vehicle for preserving social structures. Religious texts acted as a powerful channel in institutionalising and regulating different aspects of social life. Afterlife-texts warn people and encourage them to obey prescribed social norms and behavioural patterns. The investigation of the sorts and nature of punishments makes this point clearer. Punishments do not relate to religious issues, still less spiritual ones, but prominently reveal some kind of moral order (Amouzgar 198; 2003).

Ardaviraf is full of sexual patterns; the interesting point is that punishment of offenders, rewards and even material appearance of good and bad deeds have a sexual nature. Factually, the afterlife is a reflection of Sassanid social life. *Ardaviraf* is divided into 101 chapters, the first one narrates the story of Viraf and his spiritual journey, the next 10 chapters are descriptions of visiting “ahlovan” (philanthropists) and the last chapter is the end of book, but the 85 remaining chapters describe “darvandan” (sinners), hell and violent bodily punishments. Sins are mainly sex-based, with common sins between the two sexes are quite rare. The audiences of *Ardaviraf* are adult men and women. The described sins number 79, of these, 30 (38%) are sexual sins; 70% of these sexual sins are feminine and only 27% are masculine.

The main sins committed by women are prostitution, fornication (especially in case of married women), “Natars agahi” (disobedience in relation to father and especially husband), abortion, refusal of childcare or suckling, refusing to have sex or to give sexual attention to the husband and disobedience of the menstruation period rules.

To increase sexual attraction is considered as a negative behavior in texts. However, it is not clear that putting make-up and self-adornment is negative per se or that it is unpleasant within a non-marital relationship. Several relevant cases are cited in *Ardaviraf* name:

“I saw a female ghost cutting her breast with an iron comb. God Soroush and God Azar said: this is the soul of a sinful woman

who humiliated her husband, put on make-up and had an affair with another man” (Gignoux, 2003, 86).

or

“These are the spirits of sinful women who adorned themselves and used the other women’s hair for self-adornment” (ibid, 86).

However, in Sassanid visual arts such as rock reliefs and seals, only high ranking women are depicted as elegant (Rezai Rashi 2011, 46–50) whereas the female the musicians, servants and other low ranking women are mostly naked.

Unrestrained sexual relations were condemned, especially in case of female sexual desire. Controlling women’s bodies included controlling their sexuality. Female sexuality as some kind of bodily “power” and women’s reproduction ability were the subject of serious control (Gnoli 1985, 267–268). Since most of the sexual sins in *Ardaviraf* are feminine ones, even if sexual sins were relatively rare, these texts acted as a deterrent.

The main crimes committed by men include having same-sex relations, fornication, deception of married women, and refusal of family guardianship especially in cases involving young children. Same-sex relations were considered a more evil sin. The boundaries of the body are crafted through sexual taboo (Butler 1993, 55). Generally, sexual desire of towards persons of the same sex, masturbation, and some specific body parts such as the anus were powerful sexual taboos. Gender and sexual identities are mutually produced through a discursive heterosexual matrix (Butler 1999; Whitaker 2008).

However, in Sassanid texts there is no masochism or violence against (or refusal or denial of) women’s sexual desire. It is clear that sexual relations were unilaterally under men’s control, and archaeological evidence and texts generally present an image of male superiority including in sexual intercourse.

Another important point is the bodily appearance of evil and good deeds: the righteous person visits her/his worthy deed as “a beautiful virgin” (Gignoux 2003, 51; Kaikhusru 1902) and the sinners see it as “a decayed polluted prostitution” (Gignoux 2003). Virginity is the symbol of purity and prostitution is the symbol of pollution.

The sins punished by sexual agony are usually sexual sins. Many of the punishments are exerted on the relevant sexual organ, for example in chapter 19, on male same-sex relations:

“I saw the soul of a man while a snake like an arrow dipped in his anus and went out from his mouth. God Soroush and God Azar said that this is the ghost of a sinner who had sexual intercourse with other men” (Gignoux 2003, 86).

Sometimes a mundane, sinful sexual pleasure appears as agony, as in the example of a woman guilty of fornication and punished by pouring evil sperm in her mouth.

As mentioned, the audiences of *Ardaviraf name* are adult people (young people who are sexually active and able to reproduce), while the subject of its warnings are mostly women. Chapter 15 is devoted to praise “ahlo” women, while the other chapters are devoted to men.

“And I saw women souls, those with good thoughts, good speech and good deeds. I asked who they are. God Soroush and god Azar said: these are the spirits of women making their husbands happy, obeying them, respecting them and loving them as their chiefs (salar), they believe mazdisnan” (Gignoux 2003, 58).

Actually, *Ardaviraf name* focuses on worldly issues: its philanthropists are people obeying social rules more than performing religious ceremonies, while it's sinful are violators. In *Ardaviraf name* the word “canon” is repeated several times, but in this case the word is a worldly concept that refers to Sassanid social rules. As precise words are used for different kinds of sexual practices and relations in *Ardaviraf name*, it can be inferred that in the Sassanid era, there was a precisely organised sexual system, which was institutionalised via religious and juridical rules. This sexual system warned against violation and on the other hand prescribed ideal patterns for sexual life. Words such as male same-sex relation, fornication, prostitution, lust and sex define sexual practices exactly. It is clear that this precise system controlled sexual behaviour particularly for adults of reproductive age, while the word “immature” defined children as sexually inactive. This sexual system made a distinction between “Shayest va Nashayest” (good and bad deeds) creating a clear border between moral and immoral by categorising sexual behaviour.

Second episode: heaven

Pleasure, beauty and the masculine joyful king

Dialogue one (based on a “Pahlavi” text “Khosrow va Ridak” (Christensen 1944, 416). Khosrow II is talking to his special servant

("ridak"), Khosh Arezu, about mundane pleasures such as delicious foods, perfumed flowers, the best musicians and the best women:

"Khosh Arezu, tell me about the best women."

"Your majesty! The best lady is the one who always loves the man. The most beautiful lady is of average height, wide-chested, with a stylish head, hips and neck. She has small feet and a thin waist, concave soles, slim fingers and a fine body. Her breasts must be as beautiful as quinces, her nails as white as snow, her skin as red as pomegranate and as fine as lamb's wool. She has beautiful almond-like eyes, bow-like eyebrows, white teeth, long reddish black hair. She never speaks rudely."

"Each woman has her own special perfume just like a flower's fragrance..."

Dialogue two, based on "Shahname" (Floor 2010, 32):

"Prince Bahram V: 'Monzar! You are an honourable well-intentioned man always considering my needs. But everybody has a secret sadness to make his/her face pale. A noble free man gets a life of joy. Don't withhold pleasure from me! Every young man finds his pleasure in women! Bring me some beautiful sun-like faced bondwomen! Then, I will choose some.'

"Monzar: 'As you wish my majesty'."

Just imagine Sassanid palaces and open sites: Bishapour palace with those colorful mosaics describing beautiful ladies with exaggerated bodies and thin, fine costumes. There are different scenes of banquets including hunting and parties, the king accompanied by beautiful ladies (queens?), female dancers and musicians. These scenes are generally depicted on metalwork, mosaics and rock reliefs. Silver and golden plates and pitchers displaying naked/semi-naked ladies with long hair dancing or playing different kinds of musical instruments with round breasts and prominent hips. At Taq-i Bostan Khosrow II, on the second rock relief (Ghirshman 1962, 231), beautiful female musicians accompany the king on his royal hunt. These beautiful ladies with adornments, jewellery, and female beauty and fitness impressed their audience, which were probably men.

Unlike literature produced for commoners, such as *Ardaviraf name*, another group of books, seemingly produced for the ruling class contains descriptions that clearly refer to (male) sexual pleasure. They focus on sex and feminine beauty, as beauty played a key role in sexual pleasure in ancient Iran. *Khosrow and Ridak* is a good example

of this genre. A young man called Khosh Arezou informs Khosrow II (591-628 AD) (Sarfaraz and Avarzamani 2009) about the best things, among them women: the best woman is beautiful, calm and obedient (Razi 2000). He describes the ideal form of beauty in detail. *Karnamak-e Ardeshir Papakan* is a “Pahlavi” text focusing on Ardeshir as the founder of the empire. It narrates a story on how the special sexual partner of Ardavan, the last Arsacid king, fell in love with Ardeshir and escaped with him (Baqeri 1999, 2–3). Ardeshir as a founding member of the Sassanid royal family was involved in a sexual affair betraying his legal partner and having sexual intercourse with other men and women. This was considered an unforgivable sin in texts such as *Ardaviraf name* (Amouzgar 2003, 92, 94) and *Dinkard* (Amouzgar and Tafazzoli 2007, 50). It seems that sexual taboos have been defined differently for different social classes.

There are different stories about Sassanid kings such as Shapour I, Bahram V and Khosrow II. The latter is the main hero of many love stories and love poems in Islamic Iranian literature. *Khosrow and Shirin* is the most significant one, composed by Nezami Ganjavi. Khosrow II love-stories’ have even influenced the interpretation of archaeological sites, as one of the Sassanid palaces in south-western Iran (Qasr-e Shirin) has been attributed to Shirin (Hermann 1977, 160), the lover and one of the main wives of Khosrow.

It seems that pleasure in its sexual sense was something ideally far from commoners, at least in ruling class’s view. While commoners were warned about sexual pleasure, the ruling class experienced it as part of their everyday life. It was a phenomenon closely tied to social status.

“In Sassanid era, men belong to the elite had several sex partners and bondwomen. It does not seem that they have any kind of legal responsibilities towards these women except rules regulating slavery. They were just sex toys” (Floor 2009, 42).

To experience sexual attraction and wonderful sex with several beautiful women was part of the King of Kings’ identity, just like the King’s skill in royal hunting. To be with women created part of the masculinity and masculine identity of a king.

Conclusion

Sexuality is a cultural concept. It does not develop simply based on sexual organs. Social roles, expectations, domains and values are in a dynamic interaction with sexuality. Sexuality includes some acquired

characteristics, it changes during the life-course, and people experience different forms of sexual life in different life-stages. "Sex is historically mutable and socially contingent" (Steans 2006, 24). Sexuality is socially constructed, a product of cultural and historical relationships and ideologies (Voss and Schmidt 2000, 22). Experience of sexual life finds its special form based on context (Meskell 2000, 272) "Individuals according to their age, sex, class, race (see Broderick and Bernard 1969, 311; Freitas 2008, 273) and religion might think, experience and act on sexuality in different ways" (Meskell 2007, 31).

In Sassanid Iran, sexuality acted as a socially organising principle, Sassanid society was a lineal one based on patriarchal families. The continuance of this structure was guaranteed via heterosexual lawful marriage, which served the purpose of producing male successors. There was a set of precise juridical rules, religious instructions, and juridical texts about sexual life, sexual orientation, decent and indecent sexual practices. If the ruling class had accepted an alternative way of sexual life, such as same sex relations or freedom in sex relations this would have had considerable long-term consequences for the social order. Such as the birth of illegitimate children and the destruction of the patriarchal system, while controlled sexual life could guarantee the continuance of social rules (such as inheritance and marriage laws) and the reproduction of the heteronormative structure of Sassanid society in the long term.

Generally, the body as the source of power (see Barrrtky 1997, Foucault 1990), action and motion was controlled and supervised by legal channels. It could be limited (via severe bodily punishments such as making a defect in a limb and bodily disability) or expanded and strengthened (by developing skills such as fighting, hunting, bodybuilding). As Nietzsche has said, the body is an unfinished organ (Nietzsche 1982, 380), which is completed by the individual and society. Some ancient Iranian power structures generally treat sex as a power which could be dangerous, destructive and negative. "Virtually all erotic behaviour is considered bad unless a specific reason to exempt it has been established" (Rubin 1984, 158), such as reproduction. To control sexual agency was a way of organising individuals. As a bodily power defined strongly as a taboo, sexual practice had clearly defined boundaries. Such control did not necessarily involve physical or bodily violence; it acted via defining masculinity, femininity, puberty, social expectations and roles. The Sassanids classified two different sexes, putting them into two different sexual conditions: sexually active, including young adult men and women and sexually inactive, including the young and the

elderly. This organisation made it possible to exercise control over the individual's abilities and bodily powers. The body was not only the subject of external control (such as exerting pressure or violence), but also controlled itself from the inside via the socialisation and institutionalisation of social norms. Social structures emblazoned these rough norms as "natural" via institutional instruments such as religious training, reproduction or demanding commitment to marriage and family while warning people of hellish agonies in case of disobedience. "Institutionalized rituals excluded the polytheist practices of individuals and functioned as mechanisms of domination" (Last 1995, 144). This did not merely rest on the formal political system, but spread well beyond, into the social and cultural arrangements of everyday life.

The prescribed norms were not necessarily practiced by people. It seems that commoners actively reacted against Sassanid ideal norms. The Mazdak movement is a good example. This was a civil movement in the middle of the Sassanid era in which the protesters demanded equality for sexes, and freedom in sexual life. The exact starting date is unclear, but it started in the reign of Qobad (488–496; 499–531 AD) and was suppressed by his son and successor Khosrow Anushirvan (531–579 AD). Minorities and dissidents were named "Ashmouq", astray and deviant, by the Sassanid empire and the destruction of their temples, as homes for evil, was endorsed (Akbarzadeh 2006, 96) as in case of Mazdak. *Dinkard* (2007, 55), a holy text, accused Mazdak and his followers of being salacious and great heretics.

Taken together, sexuality was not simply the object of power. It formed a part of the Sassanid power structure and ruling class identity. The body can be projected as the source of power, a focus for constituting identity, individuality and self. Therefore, the body has a dual position: a subjective position and an objective position produced by the exercise of power. Notably, it can be hypothesised that sex-control arose out of religion but was actually presented as advice when the political structures became centralised and interested in conformity. The rise of bodily control reduces sexual relations to mechanical relations between the sexes with the aim of reproduction. Contextually speaking, there are some other indicators of the issue, such as the Sassanid invention of social classes as a rigid organising principle which facilitated control.

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Chapter 10

Skull-cups and snake-pits: Men's revenge and women's revenge in Viking Age Scandinavia

Bo Jensen

Introduction

Violence is rarely senseless. More often, it is a meaningful, though contested, cultural practice. Similar violent acts carry different meanings in different societies, and different societies celebrate or condemn specific kinds of violence in different ways. The Scandinavian Viking Age has a reputation for being extremely violent: contemporary Christian writers in Western Europe wrote much about Viking attacks on monasteries, and later generations of Scandinavian saga writers recorded tales of bloody feuds set in this period. In fact, there is little evidence that Scandinavians were more violent than their European contemporaries, or that this period was more violent than so many others. Much of European history was violent, and nothing in early historic Europe compares to the 20th century's massive, industrialised warfare. Nonetheless, contemporary literature suggests that violence was an important element of Viking Age society.

The relationship between literature and reality is complicated, to say the least. Here, I offer some suggestions towards how and to what extent Viking Age life imitated art. I suggest that violent stories shaped a society with strong and complex opinions about the right and wrong uses of violence. Archaeology can show how Viking Age people made sense of the violence they experienced and participated in. I argue that gender was central to that understanding of and use of

violence.

The archaeological material for this investigation consists of Viking Age iconography, specifically those images that previous researchers have interpreted as illustrating legends of revenge known from later manuscript sources. I shall discuss only stories about revenge, and focus on those illustrated in early iconography. The literature has been discussed in far more detail elsewhere, and I cannot do justice to those studies here (see e.g. Byock 1982; Clark 2012 and references therein). In this contribution, I shall only address it insofar as it is relevant for understanding the archaeological material.

Revenge as justified violence

Revenge is violence justified as a return for previous violence. The basic idea can be recognised in societies far apart both in historical period and geographically, and organised in quite different ways, including Ancient Greece, feudal Japan, early colonial highland New Guinea, the dissolving Ottoman Empire, and 20th-century organised crime. However, local understandings of revenge vary: in some places, feuds last for generations, in others, they end within months. In some, they involve huge groups of people, in others, they are limited to a few individuals. Most modern, strongly centralised states enforce a strict monopoly on legitimate violence and prevent large-scale, public feuds. Small-scale societies, marginal provinces and failed states often cannot do this. Thus, cultures of clandestine revenge characterise feudal Japan and in modern organised crime, and more public vendettas characterise early 20th-century Corsica and late 20th-century Afghanistan.

Discourses of revenge are apologetic. To label violence as revenge is to explain, and sometimes excuse it. In Viking Age Scandinavia, revenge was accepted and generally not criminalised. People involved in feuds would account for these at regular, public assemblies. The assembly would rule on cases, and decide either that injuries balanced each other out, or that one side owed monetary compensation to the other (see below). These judgements maintained a hegemonic, public ethic of revenge.

Gender and the ethics of violence

Few societies are consistently non-violent. Many more societies distinguish between more and less acceptable violence. In the modern

West, violence is consistently portrayed as more acceptable in war or crime-fighting than in civil life. A few generations ago, many Europeans thought it laudable for the state to execute criminals, but unacceptable for criminals to kill each other, or anyone else (see e.g. Floto 2001, 146; Foucault 1991, 9).

Societies' attitudes to violence depend on local, social contexts including gender, race and class. I shall not explore race or class here, except to mention two examples: the infamous lynchings of black men in the US were understood by some contemporaries as white men's defence of white women, an obviously racial and gendered context (see Litwach 2004, throughout). In Tokugawa Japan, violence by the warrior elite (*bushi*, *samurai*) against commoners was unsanctioned. Commoners could not carry arms, but some *samurai* women did (Finn 1988, 114f). Here, violence was more regulated by class than by gender.

In many cultures, violence is strongly gendered: in 19th and early 20th century western Europe, violence was considered more acceptable for men than for women. Men were encouraged to, and women discouraged from, military service and violent sports (boxing, wrestling, fencing), and men, far more than women, got involved in unorganised brawls. Violent revenge, too, is gendered, in different ways in different societies: in early colonial New Guinea, women and children were considered vulnerable and minor with regards to feuds, and often sent away to safety while men settled large-scale conflicts. Women were not primary targets but might be injured accidentally (see Wiessner 2006, throughout). In 19th-century Albanian communities women were neither fighters nor recognised targets, and could therefore replace men in some exposed roles during feuds (see Grémaux 1996, 243). In contrast, some of the most infamous Corsican vendettas supposedly started with the killing of women, and during the partition of India and Pakistan, women became easy, preferred targets for the ethnic, sexual and religious violence of men (Das 2004, throughout). Where women are not targets, some researchers stress women's central role in passing on feuds to the next generation of men (e.g. Vandkilde 2006, 522, but cf. Clark 2012, 143ff). As I shall show, Viking Age literature reveals yet another relationship between gender and revenge, different from all these. However, first I shall introduce the case study.

Viking Age Scandinavia and the sources

The label "Viking Age" is a scholarly invention. No sudden break sets

this period apart from previous or later periods, nor was the period itself homogenous. Assigned dates vary between national and disciplinary research traditions, but for this chapter, 750 to 1100 AD will do.

During this period, communities from core areas in Scandinavia expanded across the Baltic, the North Sea and the Atlantic. Scandinavians traded, raided, conquered and settled, establishing new communities from Kiev to Greenland. This expansion involved violent conquests (e.g. in England), possibly genocide (the Orkneys), and more peaceful settlement in largely uninhabited lands (Iceland). Scholars traditionally imagined this expansion as overwhelmingly male. However, written sources name some female settlers on Iceland, and Scandinavian women are surprisingly evident in the archaeology of Russia and Britain (see McLeod 2011; Stalsberg 2001, both throughout).

In Scandinavia, the Viking Age coincides with state-formation, urbanisation and Christianisation. Christian missions began in the early 800s AD, and Christianity probably became dominant between 950 and 1050 AD. The church introduced manuscript technologies, and Icelanders were producing secular manuscripts by the 1200s AD. These manuscripts record many stories set in the pre-Christian past, including myths and legends about gods and heroes, and more realistic *saga*-narratives about kings, poets and farmers.

The manuscripts were created 200 or more years after Christianisation, and it remains debated how reliable they are as sources for the pagan past. Fortunately, some of the stories recorded in these late manuscripts can be recognised in much earlier iconography. In those cases, we know that people were also telling some version of these stories in pre-Christian times. Other stories cannot be recognised in iconography, and may be much younger. I shall focus on those stories that can be recognised in early iconography.

Images of violent revenge

Viking Age Scandinavians created images on stone and wood, metal and textiles. Of these, only stone and metal consistently survive well. Most surviving images are stylised animal ornament, and not obviously narrative. Recognised Viking Age narrative images are mostly vignettes, each showing a single scene from a story. Some monuments show several scenes, either from the same story or from

different stories, not always clearly separated. I shall not attempt to illustrate this material thoroughly. I refer readers to Lindqvist's monumental work (Lindqvist 1941a; 1941b), which contains discussions of reconstruction and methodology, high-quality photos and drawings of almost all the Gotland Stones. Low quality but adequate images of almost every image discussed here can also be found online. Thus, I shall only illustrate a few examples (Fig. 10.1).

In this iconography, human figures are depicted as gendered but generic: men in trousers, often with hats and long, jutting beards, and women in skirts, bareheaded, their long hair often gathered in ornate knots. Children can rarely if ever be recognised. No attempt was made to create recognisable character portraits, and stories can be recognised only on the actions illustrated.

Some images can be identified with confidence, such as Ramsundsberget's vignettes from the legend of Sigurd Dragon-killer (see below); others have inspired several conflicting interpretations, such as Sanda I (compare Lindqvist 1941b, 108; Nylén 1978, 60; Staecker 2004 throughout); others again seem to match no surviving text, such as Garda Bote's seven hanged women (Lindqvist 1941a, Fig. 141). Just as there are images that match no surviving text, so there are texts that match no surviving image. We know that more stories and more images once existed, but have been lost.

Many of these images come from Gotland in the Baltic. These Gotland picture stones are upright, decorated limestone monoliths, unique within Scandinavia. More than 400 monoliths are known today, many badly eroded or fragmented (see Guber 2011, 11ff for research history, see Lindqvist 1941b and Nylén 1988 for catalogues). They have two flat faces, their edges shaped to form characteristic outlines. Images were carved negative or in low relief, usually on only one face (cf. Lindqvist 1941b, 53). Paint survives on some stones, usually monochrome red or black, on white ground (cf. *ibid.*, 76; Nylén 1978, 82). Sune Lindqvist divided stones into five types, A to E, and suggested relative and absolute chronologies (Lindqvist 1941a, 22ff, but cf. e.g. Andrén 1989, 291; Guber 2011, 12ff; Imer 2004, 48ff). The stones span from the 400s AD, long before the Viking Age, to the 1100s AD, well into the Christian period. The late stones are clearly burial monuments with inscriptions saying as much, and the early stones have been interpreted as such on analogy. Some stones were destroyed or reused, notably for building churches.

Early A and B stones are dominated by abstract, geometrical patterns. Middle C and D stones show cartoon-like, narrative scenes, of special interest here. Late E stones are dominated by stereotyped

ribbon-interlace dragons and floral ornament. Most C and D stones are divided into several horizontal bands, each seemingly containing one coherent scene. A few stones show apparently unrelated scenes in a single space (e.g. Ardre VIII). Andrén (1989, 295) suggests that some 30 stones are detailed enough and well enough preserved to support interpretation.

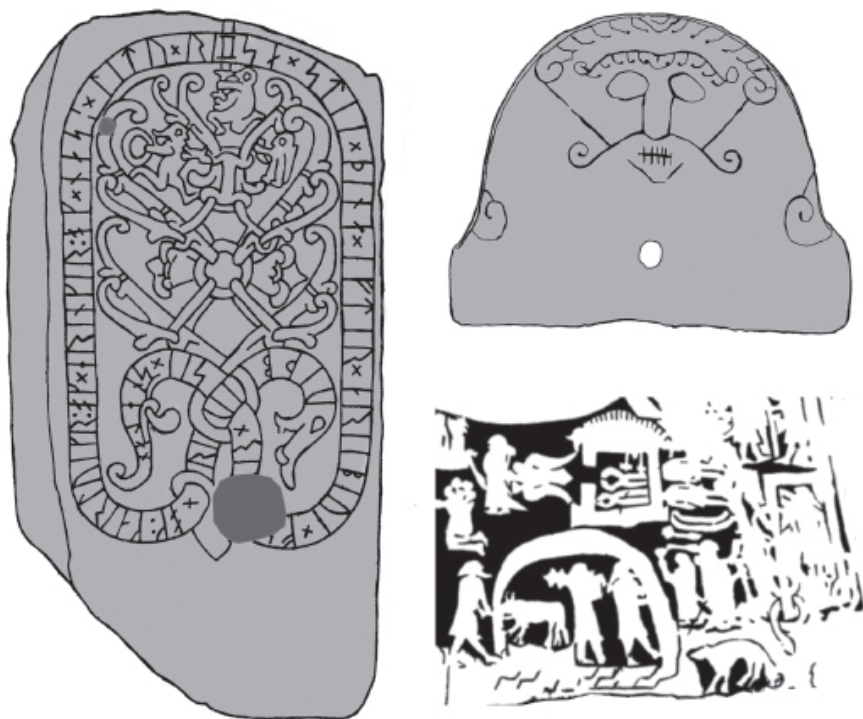


Figure 10.1. Examples of Viking Age images: left the Drävle runestone, top right the Snaptun anvil stone, bottom right a detail of the Ardre VIII stone (lower right corner, as reconstructed by Sune Lindqvist). Simplified drawings by author, not to scale. All these drawings are based on the images as reconstructed and repainted by their 20th century restorers.

The Drävle stone shows a dragon text-band, the dragon's head and tail low in the image. Above these, in the middle of the stone, we see a stylised cross, and above that a man with a sword (Sigurd), stabbing the dragon (Fafnir). The sword goes through the dragon and continues beyond the edge of the stone. It divides the word "risa", "carve", into syllables: ri//sa. To his lower left a running or prone figure with a ring (Regin?), and to the lower right a woman with a drinking horn (Gudrun's mother?). Dark grey areas indicate damage to the stone's surface.

The Snaptun stone shows a triangular man's face, with eyes, nose and mouth, hair, eyebrows and moustache. Vertical lines across the mouth may indicate stitches, suggesting that this is Loki. Beneath the face is a hole for the bellows to pass through. The spirals on either side of the hole are ornamental, and do not seem to represent parts of Loki's anatomy.

The Ardre VIII stone shows a lot of different details. In the upper middle of the detail shown here, we see a house with hammers and tongs, indicating a smithy. To the right lie two headless figures (Nidud's sons). To the left lies a strange object, possibly Wayland's wings, and far left stands a woman, facing away (Bödvild?). Beneath the headless figures stand two women, facing away from each other. The left woman holds a bowl or cup (Sigyn?), the right woman holds something long and narrow (Sigyn with a horn? Skadi with a snake?). Beneath them stands a canine (Loki's son as

wolf?). To the right, a poorly preserved human figure (Loki?) is enclosed in a rectangular frame. A snake winds around this, head to the lower left of the frame, right of the woman and the wolf. The other details of *Ardre VIII* are unrelated to these stories.

Outside Gotland, the finest narrative Viking Age carved stones come from Northern England and the Isle of Man. These were probably carved by local masons, using skills developed before the Viking invasions (Webster 2012, 129ff). The narratives identified in Britain often draw on pagan religious myth, rarely on heroic legend.

A third large group of images are found on Swedish runestones, mostly granite, and dated after AD 1000. These draw their images from heroic legend, not religious myth.

The images have been associated with a number of stories known from later texts. Several of these are about revenge: Loki's punishments; Wayland; Sigmund, Signy and Sinfjötli; Sigurd Dragon-killer; Gudrun and Atli; Hamdir and Sörli. I shall discuss each story in turn.

Loki's punishments

Loki the trickster god challenged the dwarves Brok and Sindri to work wonders, then tried to sabotage the work. When the dwarves claimed his head as their prize. Loki avoided beheading by insisting that his neck was his own. Brok then sewed his mouth shut. This story is known from *Skaldaskarpamál* 5, in the Prose Edda, probably written in the early 1200s.

Later, Loki tricked blind Höder into firing an arrow at Höder's brother, Baldur, killing him. In revenge, Baldur's father, Odin, turned one of Loki's sons into a wolf, who killed Loki's other son. Odin tied Loki to three millstones with his dead son's intestines which turned to iron. Loki was imprisoned in a cave, and the goddess Skadi set a serpent to drip corrosive venom into his face. Loki's wife, Sigyn, stood by with a pail to catch most of this. The story is vaguely implied in *Völuspá* 35, in the Poetic Edda, and clearly told in *Gylfaginning* 49, in the Prose Edda, both probably written down in the early 1200s. Buisson (1976, 33) cites *Ragnarsdrápa* as evidence that some version of the story existed in the 800s. Several images may refer to this story:

The Danish Snaftun carving is a simple line-drawing of a man with a moustache, his mouth crossed by vertical lines, interpreted as stitches (Fig. 10.1 and Madsen 1990 throughout). The stone was used by a smith to protect bellows from sparks, and the image of troublemaker Loki disciplined by a smith is relevant to that use. The stone was found in Denmark, but is made of steatite, likely imported

from south Norway. It may have been decorated in either country. The style is crude Mammen, probably from the late 900s.

Ardre VIII, Gotland (Fig. 10.1 and Lindqvist 1941a, 96 and Fig. 139), bottom right, shows a man bound within a rectangular frame, with several snakes on the margins. To his left stands a dog or wolf, possibly Loki's transformed son. Above the wolf stand two women, facing away from each other. The woman to the right, closer to the man, holds a long, unidentifiable object. Lindqvist interpreted her as Sigyn with a drinking-horn for the serpent's venom (*ibid.*). Buisson (1976, 65) interpreted her as Skadi with the serpent. He saw the woman to the left as Sigyn with a bowl for the venom. The further woman does carry a bowl, but she faces away, and may not belong to this vignette at all. No text mentions a drinking-horn, so the closer woman is most likely Skadi. If so, this is a rare example of iconography showing a (divine) woman's role in revenge. Imer (2004, 105) dates this stone to the 900s.

Alskog Kyrka, Gotland (Lindqvist 1941b, 14 and Fig. 135) shows a woman standing at the feet of a prone man, under a roof with a possible snake. Neither ties, nor pail are visible on the badly damaged stone. This scene may well show Loki and Sigyn. Alternatively, as Oerl (2009, 543) stresses, the possible snake may be a swan. In that case, this scene resembles Sanda I, and has no connection to Loki's punishment. Imer (2004, 100) dates this stone to the 800s or 900s.

Ardre Kyrka III shows a bound man (lower left corner) and a seated man with a ring (centre). Oerl (2009, 551 note 44) rejects Snædal's interpretation of these as Loki bound and Odin with his ring Draupnir, convincingly arguing that the scene refers to Wayland (see below). Even in Snædal's reading, neither Skadi nor Sigyn are depicted. Ornamented in Urnes Style, the stone dates after 1050.

The Gosforth cross shows a man on his back, bound hands and feet, with a woman kneeling over him, holding a crescent-shaped possible bowl. Several ambiguous details may be snakes or ropes. The two figures are enclosed in a simple circle, perhaps representing the cave. The snake overhead is not evident, but the woman and the bowls makes the association to Loki's punishment reasonably convincing. The cross dates to the 800s or 900s.

The Kirkby Stephen stone depicts a man, bound wrists, waist and ankles. He may have ram's horns, perhaps an allusion to Christian demonology (Webster 2012, 217). The absence of Sigyn, the snake and the cave suggest that this does not portray Loki (cf. Collingwood 1927, 138). The style is crude Mammen, probably from the late 900s.

The damaged River Thames bone plaque shows a man held around

the waist, wrists and ankles by two snakes (Graham-Campbell 2013, Fig. 123; Webster 2012, 214). The few details present do not match the myth of Loki's punishment. The style is well-executed Mammen, probably from the late 900s.

The Sherburne St. John stirrup depicts a man, bound in a web of ropes stretching in all directions. Leslie Webster (2012, 217) identifies him as Odin, on unclear grounds: in myths, Odin was hanged, imprisoned between two fires, and eaten by a wolf, but never bound. Loki was bound, but in the absence of the millstones, Sigyn, the snake and the cave this interpretation is unconvincing. The image is crude, possibly Mammen style, dating perhaps to the late 900s.

This legend was popular, and other images show details unrelated to revenge: a runestone from the destroyed monument at Hunnestad near Lund may show Hyrrokin, the giantess who assisted at Baldur's funeral, riding her wolf brindled with a serpent. The funeral motif is fitting for a burial monument. The image is well-executed Mammen-style, probably late 900s. Karl Hauck, Morten Axboe and others have argued that Baldur's murder is a recurrent motif on the gold bracteates from the AD 400s and 500s (see Axboe 2007, 110, and references therein). If so, the story must have existed in a recognisable form for some 800 years before being written down. Interestingly, Loki's punishment is never illustrated in the older images, nor is the murder shown in Viking Age images. The story may be the same, but different scenes were selected for illustration.

In sum, three images can be confidently identified as references to Loki's punishments (Snaptun, Ardre VIII, Gosforth). Only one of these may show any of his persecutors (Skadi on Ardre VIII).

Wayland

Wayland the smith was enslaved and maimed by King Nidud. Nidud gave his own daughter, Bödvild, a ring Wayland had made. Wayland made magical wings for himself, killed the king's two (unnamed) sons, made cups from their skulls and hid the bodies. When Bödvild broke the ring and asked Wayland to repair it, he got her drunk and raped or seduced her. Wayland agreed to locate Nidud's sons if Nidud promised not to hurt Wayland's child. This promised, Wayland told everything and flew away laughing. The story is told in *Völundarkviða*, in the Poetic Edda, possibly from the early 1200s. A more detailed variant of the story was recorded in the much later *Velentsaga* in *píðriks saga af Bern*, from the 1500s. Helmbrecht (2012, 176f) argues that one detail known only from *Velentsaga* can be recognised on the Uppåkra mount,

probably from the 900s. Buisson (1976, 33) cites *Ragnarsdrápa* as evidence that some version of the story existed in the 800s.

Several images illustrate this story:

Ardre VIII, Gotland (Fig. 10.1 and Lindqvist 1941a, Fig. 139; 1941b, 24), shows Wayland's smithy, tools hanging from the roof and two headless men lying outside. A strange object to the left may or may not be Wayland's wings, and the woman further left may or may not be Bödvild (Buisson 1976, 70ff). All these details fit the text. On the right of the smithy, we may see the keys to Wayland's chest (*ibid.*), and, strangely, skis, a boat or walrus tusks (cf. Betz 1973, 91). Imer (2004, 105) dates this stone to the 900s.

Alskog Kyrka has been re-interpreted by Oerl, based on a re-examination of the stone (Lindqvist 1942b, Fig. 135, but cf. critique in Oerl 2009). He reconstructs several details that Lindqvist did not see, and argues that the stone shows a kneeling figure, holding a possible hammer and working on a ring, set on a possible anvil. The smith kneels inside a building. Outside, to the left, lies a prone body, interpreted as (only) one dead son of Nidud. Further left stand two women, and between them a strange object which Oerl interprets as Wayland's bird-suit. He sees both women as valkyries, Wayland's wife and one of her sisters (Oerl 2009, 544ff). Thus, in Oerl's interpretation, this stone shows Wayland's murder of the king's son(s), but not his rape of Bödvild. Imer (2004, 105) dates this stone to the 900s.

Ardre Kyrka III has also been reinterpreted by Oerl. This stone is much better preserved. Oerl (2009, 550ff) interpreted the central figure as a bird-man, holding a ring on an anvil. The figure lacks one foot, a possible reference to Wayland's maiming. In the lower left corner of the image, a small, bound figure could refer to Wayland's captivity. This stone does not show his victims or his revenge. Ornamented in Urnes Style, the stone dates after 1050.

The Franks casket shows Wayland and two women, interpreted as the king's daughter and her chaperone. The chaperone is not mentioned in *Völundskviða*, only in *Velentssaga*. Wayland offers one woman a cup with one hand, while his other hand holds a pair of tongs with a severed human head. Under Wayland's feet, (only) one dead body lies prone. On the far right, a man captures two birds (Webster 1982, plate 22). He has been identified as Wayland's brother, Egil, gathering raw materials for Wayland's wings. He, too, appears only in *Velentssaga*. Betz (1973, 101) used the casket to show that some details of *Velentssaga* are as old as those of *Völundarkviða*. Buisson suggested that the Anglo-Saxon version of the legend, with

one decapitated boy, may have differed from the preserved, Scandinavian version, with two boys. Oerl's work (above) suggested that both versions were known in Scandinavia, though only one was ever written down. The scene is remarkably brutal: here, and only here, do we see a killer handling and trampling the remains of his victim. Leslie Webster (2012, 91ff) suggests that the casket was produced in the 700s in Northumbria, probably for a king's psalter.

The Leeds Church and Leeds Museum cross-shafts have also been interpreted as illustrations of Wayland, shown lifting up Bödvidl. The relevant part of the church shaft is three-quarters complete, and seems to show a half-man, half-bird figure, tools (tongs, two clubs) and a woman. The lower left part of the man is lost. The Leeds Museum scene is less than half complete, and Bödvidl is not represented on the surviving fragment. However, the image seems identical to the scene from Leeds church (Betz 1973, 94 must be a reconstruction; Collingwood 1927, 163, and figs. 193–194). The similarity between the two Leeds images suggests that one was copied from the other. Neither shows Wayland's killings, but both may hint at his rape of Bödvidl. Based on their style, these images may date to the 900s.

The Bedale and Sherbourne fragments may also be relevant. I have only seen simplified line drawings of these (www.archeurope.com/index.php?page=leeds-cross-etc). Both incomplete motifs combine parts of man and bird: on Bedale, a human face inside a large bird, on Sherbourne the lower half of a bird with possible human legs. This may be Wayland, but none of his victims are shown on the surviving fragments. Thus, these are not illustrations of Wayland's revenge.

The Swedish Uppåkra mount shows Wayland with his wings (Helmbrecht 2012, throughout, Helmbrecht 2013, 3ff, Graham-Campbell 2013, fig. 173; Winge 2011). The mount is flame-gilded copper-alloy, an openwork lost-wax casting. Its quality suggests an origin in society's absolute elite, and the findspot is one of Sweden's richest Viking Age sites, likely a royal seat. Based on its style, the mount may date after AD 950 (see Helmbrecht 2012, throughout, with excellent illustrations).

Another scabbard chape, from Birka's black earth in Sweden, shows a closely related motif. The piece is dated to the mid-900s (Helmbrecht 2012, 174). It is somewhat corroded and thus ambiguous, but may show Wayland in his bird-suit, alone, as on the Uppåkra piece. Again, this is not an illustration of revenge. Helmbrecht (*ibid.*, 175) mentions several similar chapes, but stresses that they may show birds, rather than bird-men. These chapes date to 900s.

Thus, ten images may refer to Wayland. Of these, three refer to

Wayland's murder of the king's sons (Ardre VIII, Franks, Alskog K:a), four images show Bödvild and may imply her rape (Franks, Ardre VIII, Leeds Church, Leeds Museum), and four to seven indicate Wayland's escape (Leeds Church, Leeds Museum, Uppåkra, Birka, ?Ardre VIII, ?Alskog K:a, ?Franks).

Sigmund, Signy and Sinfiötli

Signy, daughter of Völsung, married King Siggeir, who then had her father and brothers placed in stocks to be eaten by a wolf. Signy saved one brother, Sigmund. She bore Siggeir two sons, who failed Sigmund's tests. Signy then disguised herself and seduced her brother, bearing Sinfiötli, who passed Sigmund's tests. Sigmund and Sinfiötli found two werewolves sleeping, stole their magical wolf-skins, and lived as wolves for nine days before burning the skins. They attacked Siggeir, but were defeated and imprisoned in a stone chamber. Signy smuggled in Sigmund's sword, hidden in pork hidden in straw, and the men cut their way out. Sinfiötli killed Siggeir's sons, and the trio burned down the hall, killing the king. Signy walked back into the flames and died (*Völsunga saga* ch. 5–8).

A man named Sinfiötli speaks for the Ylfing army in *Helgakviða Hunningsbana I* and *II*. This may be Sigmund's son or another man by the same name. Later, Sinfiötli killed Borghild's (unnamed) brother and paid compensation to her. However, when Sigmund married Borghild, she poisoned Sinfiötli in revenge. Sigmund carried Sinfiötli's body until an old man offered to transport it on his boat. The old man disappeared with the body (*Völsunga saga* ch. 10, *Frá dauða Sinfjötla*). Modern commentators speculate that the old man was the god Odin in disguise (e.g. Byock 1999, note 37).

Sinfiötli's death is described in the Poetic Edda and *Völsunga saga*, both from the 1200s, but most of this story is known only from the *Völsunga saga*. Buisson (1976, 33) cites *Ragnarsdrapa* as evidence that some version of the story existed in the 800s.

On Ardre VIII, Gotland, Buisson (1976, 50ff) read several scenes as illustrations of these legends. One vignette shows two men tied up inside an oval. Outside stands a woman with a sword on her belt. In Buisson's interpretation, this is Sigmund and Sinfiötli in the stone chamber, with Signy smuggling the sword (*ibid.*, 54 and 80f). The identification is dubious: the text does not mention anyone being tied up, but does explicitly state that the sword was hidden and the men separated by a stone slab. Thus, few details of text fit the image. Women with swords are shown in other contexts, and are usually

identified as valkyries (but see Jensen 2010, 32ff). Imer (2004, 105) dates this stone to the 900s.

Another vignette on Ardre VIII shows two men kneeling with an unidentifiable object. Buisson interprets this as Sigmund and Sinfiötli with the two wolfskins (ibid. 82). Again, this is dubious: the object could be almost anything but one object can hardly represent two skins. The sleeping werewolves and the fire used to destroy the skins are also absent.

Ellmers (1995, 168) interpreted Stenkyrka Lillbjärs III as an illustration of the death of Sinfiötli. This is unconvincing: the two men in the boat are both alive enough to grip ropes, and the footman may only appear isolated because of poor preservatons (see Lindqvist 1941b, 123). I shall return to this image below. Imer (2004, 104) dates this stone after 750.

Thus, all suggested identifications of these stories in Viking Age images are unconvincing.

Sigurd Dragon-killer

Three gods killed Otr, an otter-shape-shifter. They paid compensation in gold. Otr's elder brother, Fafnir, claimed this gold for himself and became a dragon. The younger brother, Regin, raised the orphan Sigurd (son of Sigmund the Völsung, above), remade Sigmund's sword, and trained Sigurd to kill Fafnir. Sigurd avenged his parents, then killed Fafnir, stabbing the dragon from beneath to reach a vulnerable spot. Dying, Fafnir warned Sigurd of Regin's treachery. Sigurd roasted the dragon's heart for Regin, burned and sucked his thumb, and accidentally tasted the dragon's blood. He thus learned the language of the birds. They, too, warned him of Regin's treachery. Sigurd then killed Regin (*Reginismál*, *Fafnirsmál*, *Skaldarskarpamál* 7, *Völsunga saga* ch. 13–20).

Sigurd freed the valkyrie Brynhild (or Sigdrifa) from a ring of fire (*Sigrdrifasmál*, *Völsunga saga* ch. 21–22, 29). Sigurd promised to marry Brynhild, but Queen Grimhild used a magic potion to make Sigurd forget his earlier commitments and marry Grimhild's daughter Gudrun (*Völsunga saga* ch. 28; the Edda poems skip this episode). Brynhild married Gudrun's brother Gunnar, thinking him her liberator. When she learned the truth, she convinced Gunnar to make his youngest brother, Guttorm, attack and kill Sigurd, either in his bedroom next to Gudrun, or in the wilderness (texts disagree). Dying, Sigurd cut Guttorm in two. After Sigurd's death, Brynhild killed her own household and burned down her hall, killing herself (*Völsunga saga* ch.

26–33, *Brot af Sigurdarkviða*, *Sigurðskviða in skama*, *Guðrúnarhvöt*; each text tells only part of the story, and they disagree on details). Various parts of this story are told in the Poetic Edda, the Prose Edda and in *Völsunga saga*, all written down in the 1200s.

The English Hatton cross shaft shows “*The smith at his forge, and again with his head off; above, Sigurd sucking his thumb while he roasts the dragon’s heart; and at the top the birds telling him the story of the treasure*” (Collingwood 1927, 160). Sigurd sucking his thumb clearly identifies the story. The details imply that Regin’s death is a consequence of his betrayal of Fafnir and his planned betrayal of Sigurd. The image may date to the 900s.

Ramsundsberget, Sweden, shows several vignettes: Sigurd kills one of two dragons who double as text-band, stabbing from below; Sigurd’s horse, Grani, stands by and two birds sit in a tree; by a fire, Sigurd tastes the blood on his thumb; and Regin lies decapitated, surrounded by his smith’s tools and the body of Otr. The images date around AD 1000.

Gök, Stängnäs, Sweden offers a less clear version of the same motif: Sigurd kills the dragon, Regin lies dead, hammer in hand, but without the dramatically severed head, Grani stands by, and one bird sits on the ground. A vague shape above Regin may be Otr. More hands below Regin may indicate another human figure, damaged beyond recognition. We do not see Sigurd tasting the dragon’s blood. A cross suggests a date in the Christian period, after AD 1000.

Drävle, Sweden, shows a different selection of vignettes (Fig. 10.1): Sigurd stabs the dragon text-band at the top. To the lower left, a man with open arms may be Regin, dead, and apparently holding a ring. To the right, a woman raises a drinking-horn. Women with drinking-horns are depicted on the Gotland stones and as metal pendant jewellery (Jensen 2010, 32ff). They have conventionally been labelled valkyries. Sigurd drinks with the valkyrie Brynhild/Sigrdrifa in *Völsunga saga* ch. 21 and in *Sigrdrifamál*. However, Staecker (2006, 365) suggests that the woman is Grimhild, Gudrun’s mother, offering Sigurd the magic potion. In either case, her presence hints at Brynhild’s revenge. A floriate cross in the middle of the image suggests a date after AD 1000.

Arsunda, Sweden, shows a simpler version of this scene: a man stands in position to stab the dragon-text band from below, and another man, possibly Regin, stands or lies to his right. The woman is not depicted. This stone probably dates to the 1000s.

One fragment of the Kirk Andreas cross slab from the Isle of Man shows Sigurd, thumb in mouth, roasting three ring-shaped slices of

Fafnir's heart, with one bird and the horse behind him. The fragmentary curves under Sigurd may or may not be the dragon. Neither Regin nor Brynhild/Sigrdrifa is shown on the surviving fragment (see Graham-Campbell 2013, fig. 196). The image may date to the 900s.

Västerlång, Sweden, shows a possible Sigurd killing one of several dragons, as on Ramsundsberget. A cross suggests a date after AD 1000. This scene depicts no violence committed in revenge.

The so-called "Vladimir-axe" from Kazan, Russia, shows a snake-dragon pierced by a sword. This may be Fafnir, but Sigurd is not shown (see Graham-Campbell 2013, fig. 143). No revenge is shown. Graham-Campbell (*ibid.*, 128f) identifies this piece as Ringerike-style, dated to the 1000s.

Stora Ramsjö, Sweden, shows a man with a sword, standing, arms spread, another figure running towards him or lying prone, high above a cross and an apparently uninjured dragon text-band. This could be Sigurd, Regin and Fafnir, but the identification is very dubious. The style of this stone suggests a later date, perhaps in the AD 1100s.

Ardre VIII (top), Gotland, shows a horseman on an eight-legged horse and two fallen warriors, one bent double. Staecker interprets this as Sigurd, because Sigurd's horse, Grani, was a descendant of Odin's eight-legged horse, Sleipner (Staecker 2006, 364). However, text evidence suggests that Grani looked like any other horse (cf. *Völsunga saga* ch. 13) and Ramsundsberget and Gök shows him with four legs and a heavy saddle (cf. Andrén 1989, fig. 9). In contradiction to Staecker's opinion (2006, 365), the two fallen men are unlikely to be Sigurd's three brothers-in-law: only one of these died, Guttorm, and he was cut in two, not bent double. More likely, the horseman is Odin as god of battle. Imer (2004, 105) dates this stone to the 900s.

Alskog Tjängvide, Gotland, shows a variant of the same scene as Ardre VIII, and invites a parallel interpretation. The stone is Lindquist type C, and Imer (2004, 106f) dates these to the 800s.

Lärbro St Hamars III, Gotland, shows a man, a woman and a giant bird. Staecker (2006, 165) speculatively reconstructs an episode not found in the manuscripts, and suggests that these are Sigurd, Brynhild and Odin in bird-shape. More credibly, Lindqvist (1941a, 95) interprets this image as the story of the giant Suttung who did appear as a bird (in *Skaldarskarpamál* 2). Imer (2004, 105) dates this stone to the 800s.

Stenkyrka Lillbjärs III, Gotland, shows a horseman and a woman; a

footman; and two men in a boat. Staecker (2006, 365) reads the motif as Sigurd and Brynhild; Guttorm; and an unrelated scene. Ellmers (1995, 168) read it as an unrelated scene; Sigmund; and the old man and Sinfiötli. Both interpretations are unconvincing. The horseman and woman are similar to Ardre VIII (above), and the footman may be isolated only by poor preservation. Imer (2004, 104) dates this stone to the 750s.

Similar reservations apply for Staecker's (2006, 165) interpretations of Stenkyrka Smiss, Klinte Hunninge I, Lärbro St Hamars I and Lärbro Tängelgård I, all from Gotland. Staecker himself stresses the ambiguity of Stenkyrka Smiss. His reading of Klinte Hunninge I derives from arguments rejected above. For Lärbro St Hamars I and Lärbro Tängelgård I, he relies on Andrén's hermeneutic argument (1989, 299ff): *if* all scenes on each of these two stones illustrate one myth, and *if* pictures are to be read bottom to top, like many rune-stones, and *if* we accept all loaded horses as Grani with Fafnir's gold, *then* these stones can be read as illustrations of the Sigurd cycle. Andrén's reading is ingenious, but many individual scenes are hopelessly generic, as he himself observes (e.g. his Bild 4, *ibid.*, 301), and several require him to reconstruct details never mentioned in the relevant texts (cf. *ibid.*, note 45). The most convincingly identified, recurrent detail on Lärbro St Hamars I and Lärbro Tängelgård I is the man under the loaded horse, both bisected by a vertical line. It seems clear that the lines were carved on purpose, through the man and horse, and affecting nothing else. Andrén reads this as Grani standing over the fallen Sigurd, both cut in two by a sword-stroke. However, in the texts Guttorm, not Sigurd, was cut in two, and Grani was not injured (*Guðrúnarkviða II*, *Brot av Sigurdskviða*, *Völsunga saga* ch. 32, *Sigurdskviða in skamma* 22–24). This intriguing motif may refer to a lost tale. Imer (2004, 105) dates Klinte Hunninge I to the 800s or 900s, the other three stones to the 900s.

Finally, the stone from Hangvar Austers, Gotland is damaged, but shows a man, apparently unarmed, confronting a strange, many-legged "dragon". The stone is very early (type A, perhaps AD 400–600, cf. Nylén 1978, 30f, Guber 2011, 62). If this is Sigurd and Fafnir, it is by far the earliest illustration. Ney (2006, 63) suggests that the animal is not Fafnir but the Midgaard serpent (see *Gylfaginning* 34). Both interpretations are equally anachronistic and unconvincing. In any case, Otr and Regin are not in evidence and nothing suggests that the dragon-killing was yet linked to ideas of revenge. I shall leave this image out of analysis.

Likewise, Collingwood rejected any interpretation for the smith and birds on the Kirkholm (Kilmorie) cross-slab, citing the lack of telling detail (Collingwood 1927, 92). That image shows Christ crucified, and below him, a man standing, smith's tools to our right and two birds to our left. This could be Sigurd or Wayland or St Dunstan with doves, but it does not show any killing. I shall leave out this image, too. The image cannot be dated with any precision, but may postdate the 900s.

To sum up, a large number of scenes show dragon-killings. Only Ramsundsberget shows Otr, while five images may show Regin dead (Hatton, Ramsundsberget, Gök, Drävle, Arsunda). Only these details associate the dragon-killing with revenge. One possible, but ambiguous, scene may show Gunhild, Brynhild or Sigdrifa (Drävle), but no image convincingly shows Sigurd's death, let alone Brynhild's central role in it. Legends from the Völsung cycle also appear on several Norwegian wooden church portals, most famously Hylestad. These early Romanesque carvings postdate the Viking Age proper, and I shall not discuss them here (AD 1200s). Staecker (2006, 366) suggests that they represent propaganda for the Norwegian royal house who claimed to descend from Sigurd (but cf. Byock 1999, 8).

Gudrun and Atli

After Sigurd's death, Gudrun married king Atli the Hun, and bore him two sons (usually nameless). Fafnir's gold passed to Gunnar. Greedy for gold, Atli had Gudrun's brothers Gunnar and Högni captured, tortured and killed. Gunnar died in a snake-pit, playing a harp, either with his hands (*Atlakviða* 31) or with his toes, hands tied. Gudrun killed Atli's sons, making cups from their skulls and a meal of their hearts. After Atli ate, Gudrun proclaimed her actions, stabbed him, locked and burned down the hall. This killed the Huns and destroyed the Kingdom (*Völsunga saga* ch. 35–40, *Atlakviða*, *Atlamál in groenlanzko*, *Skaldarskarpamál* 7). These legends are very loosely based on the real-world history of Attila the Hun (see Babcock 2005, throughout). Variant legends, with variant names, exist in Germany, and inspired Richard Wagner's *Ring* cycle (see, e.g. Murdoch 1996, 147ff, Byock 1999, 26ff). Various parts of this story are told in the Poetic Edda, the Prose Edda and in *Völsunga saga*, all written in the 1200s. An exceptionally early fragment of the story is recorded on the Rök stone (800s), which cites the text we otherwise known as *Atlamál in groenlanzko*, recorded in full in the Poetic Edda.

Five images have been interpreted as illustrations of Gunnar's

death. Much of the discussion has focused on his harp, explicitly mentioned in all relevant texts. Snake-pits also figure in the stories of Ragnar Lodbrog, Loki (above) and possibly in lost tales (see below).

The baptismal font from Norum church, Sweden, shows a man in a snake-pit, the harp by his feet. The image dates to the early Christian period, after AD 1000. This is one of only two images that convincingly show Gunnar's harp. The other example is Hylestad stave church, another Christian and late context (Graham-Campbell 2013, 177).

Graham-Campbell (*ibid.*) discusses the Oseberg wagon, from Norway, as an illustration of Gunnar's death, but rejects the identification because the harp is not shown. The Oseberg burial dates to the 800s.

The Gotland picture stones Stenkyrka Smiss and Klinte Hunninge I show snake-pits. Staecker (2006, 365) unconvincingly argues that other details on these images also fit the Gunnar-legend. Stenkyrka Smiss I is damaged, but shows a man in a snake-pit, surrounded by three women and six men. No harp is visible. Klinte Hunninge I shows a man in a snake-pit without a harp, while a woman stands by his feet with a snake; a woman carrying a snake; and an archer (possibly) holding a snake during an attack. Lindqvist (1941a, 103f) reconstructed this as a lost tale of how a hero died and a woman avenged him by planting a snake on his enemy. He admitted that the crucial detail, the archer's snake, is badly eroded and might instead be a bow or a shield. Even the woman's snake is open to interpretation (Lindqvist 1941b, 80, and *ibid.*, fig. 428). Thus, this image cannot be convincingly associated with this is Gunnar's death. Imer (2004, 105) dates Klinte Hunninge I to the 800s or 900s, Stenkyrka Smiss to the 900s.

Ardre VI, Gotland may show a highly stylised snake-pit (Lindqvist 1941b, 22), but the man within seems to carry a child, inconsistent with Gunnar's legend. This stone is Lindqvist type E, dated after 1000.

Collingwood (1927, 138) noted the presence of men and serpents on the images from Great Clifton, Gosforth and Penrith (900s and 1000s) but rejected these as illustrations of Gunnar's death, because the harp is not shown. Instead, he suggested reading them as Christ's harrowing of hell. Certainly, none of these images show Gudrun's revenge for Gunnar's death. All this material, then, must be left out of the analysis.

To sum up, at least four different images show snake-pits. None indicate Atli's death or Gudrun's revenge.

Hamdir and Sörli

Widowed, Gudrun married king Jonakr and bore two sons, Hamdir and Sörli. Gudrun's and Sigurd's daughter, Svanhild, married king Jormunrekk, who wrongly accused her of infidelity and killed her. Gudrun drove her sons to revenge. They were invulnerable to iron, and managed to cut off Jormunrekk's arms and legs. However, the king (or Odin) then told the court to stone the boys, and they died. The story is told in *Hamðismál* and *Gudrunarhvot* in the Poetic Edda, in *Skaldarskarpamál* 7 in the Prose Edda, and in *Völsunga saga* ch. 43–44, all written down in the 1200s. Buisson (1976, 33) cites *Ragnarsdrapa* as evidence that some version of the story existed in the 800s.

Two images have been interpreted as illustrating this legend:

At Ardre VIII, Gotland, top left, a very difficult scene shows one swordsman standing, one figure lying down, possibly without arms and legs, and three more people standing. Lindqvist (1941b, 23) thought the three people were erecting a picture stone while the artist lay face down carving it. He did not explain the swordsman. Buisson (1976, 108) saw the swordsman as Hamdir or Sörli, the fallen man as Jormunrekk, but strangely argued that here, Jormunrekk has not been dismembered. The three people are presumably Jormunrekk's courtiers. In Lindqvist's version, the swordsman is unexplained, in Buisson's, one live swordsman represents two dead brothers. Neither is convincing. In any case, Gudrun's and Svanhild's roles are not shown. Imer (2004, 105) dates this stone to the 900s. Lindqvist (1941, 108) suggests that Sanda I, Gotland, may show Svanhild and Jormunrekk, but very different identifications have been suggested, all equally unconvincing (see above). The stone is Lindqvist type B, before 800. Thus, no image convincingly shows Hamdir and Sörli.

Images of revenge

I sum up the identifications in Tab. 10.1. Single and double question marks indicate unconvincing and very unconvincing interpretations, discussed above.

Most images show the situation before or after violence, not violence itself: we see Regin and King Nidud's sons dead, but we do not see them being killed. The only confrontations shown are those between Sigurd and the dragon, Gunnar and the snakes.

Almost all the violence in the images is male-on-male: Brok (male), and Odin (male), punished Loki (male); Wayland (male), took revenge on Nidud (male); male gods killed Otr (male); Sigurd (male), killed

Fafnir and Regin (males); and Atli (male) arranged the death of Gunnar (male). The only possible scenes of women's revenge are the possible image of Skadi on Ardre VIII and Lindqvist's reading of Klinte Hunninge I. The only female victims are Nidud's daughter Bödvild (up to four examples), and Loki's wife Sigyn, a minor character in relations between men (up to three examples). The vengeful women of literature, Brynhild, Gudrun, Signy the Völsung, and Borghild, cannot be confidently recognised, and are never shown committing acts of violence. In images, revenge seems very much a masculine concern. That impression is very different from the text-based evidence. To explain this, I shall place these vengeful women in the context of the manuscript tradition. It is just barely possible that differences between image and text can be explained as the results of geographical or chronological variations, but far more likely that the explanation was contextual: eventually, Gudrun's story spread from Germany to Iceland, suggesting little geographical variation, and it seems unlikely that medieval Christianisation increased interest in violent heroines.

Table 10.1. Scenes related to revenge in Viking iconography

<i>Legend</i>	<i>Image</i>	<i>Details</i>
Loki's punishments	Snapturn	Loki, mouth sewn shut.
	Ardre VIII	Loki bound with ? Skadi and ?Sigyn.
	Alskog Kyrka	?Loki and ?Sigyn under a serpent (? swan). Damaged.
	Gosforth	Loki bound with Sigyn.
	Kirkby Stephen	?Loki bound with ? horns. Dubious.
	Sherburne St. John	?Loki bound (?Odin). Dubious.
	Ardre VIII	Smithy with two dead boys, ?wings, ? Bödvild.
	Alskog Kyrka	Wayland, one dead boy, ?wings, two women.
	Ardre Kyrka III	Bird-man smith. No revenge shown.
	Franks casket	Wayland in his smithy, one dead boy, Bödvild and ?chaperone.

Wayland	Leeds church	Wayland as birdman, Bödvild.
	Leeds museum	Wayland as birdman, Bödvild.
	Bedale	Birdman. No revenge shown.
	Sherbourne	Birdman. No revenge shown.
	Uppåkra	Wayland with wings. No revenge shown.
	Birka chape	Birdman. No revenge shown.
	Hatton	Sigurd, birds, Regin as smith, Regin dead.
	Ramsundsberget	Otr dead, Sigurd kills Fafnir, Sigurd roasting the heart, birds, Grani, Regin dead, extra dragon.
	Gök	Sigurd kills Fafnir, bird, Grani, Regin dead.
	Drävle	Sigurd kills Fafnir, ? Regin dead, woman with drinking horn (? Gudrun's mother, ? Brynhild).
	Arsunda	?Sigurd kills ?Fafnir, ? Regin dead.
Sigurd legend	Kirk Andreas	Sigurd with Fafnir's heart, bird, horse.
	Västerljung	?Sigurd kills ?Fafnir. Extra dragon.
	Kazan "Vladimir" axe	?Fafnir dying. Sigurd not shown.
	Stora Ramsjö	?Sigurd and ?Fafnir, killing not obvious. Unexplained running figure or ?Regin dead.
	Norum	Gunnar's death. No revenge shown.
Gudrun and Atli	Stenkyrka Smiss	?Gunnar's death. No

Revenge in the texts

Early Scandinavian laws suggest that violent revenge was a common and accepted way of seeking redress. Byock (1982, 27) describes Icelandic medieval law as aimed more at resolving feuds than at preventing them. Laws also describe a system of monetary compensation, both as an alternative and as a supplement to violence. Realistic narrative sources suggest that compensation might be paid, but violence could still be used (see Miller 1983, 183f). Myths and legends occasionally mention compensation, but focus on violent revenge.

In narratives and laws, compensation is governed by three rules: first, different people were worth different amounts. Kings were worth more than free men, free men more than slaves. Thus, Wayland's killing of the King's two sons is less serious than would be killing the King himself. Second, different injuries had different value. Severing a hand was "cheaper" than severing an arm. The laws give fixed prices for different injuries and killings, but narrative texts suggest that negotiation was common. Slight against honour, too, had their price. Third, realistic narratives suggest that feuds could involve biological kin, married kin and biologically unrelated allies and household members (see e.g. *Njálsaga*, ch. 35–41). Legends focus on revenge for close biological relatives: siblings, parents and children.

Revenge worked as a subsystem in a larger social logic of exchange, which also affected marriage, kinship and loyalty. In myth and legend, we hear of marriage as compensation. Thus, Atli loses his sister Brynhild, but as compensation gains Gudrun as his wife (*Sigurdskviða in skama*); Skadi loses her father but gains a husband as compensation (*Skaldaskarpamál 1*). In more realistic accounts, offers of marriage or fostering connect the offended party to the mediator, not to the offenders (Byock 1982, 42). Much of the poetic literature praises generous lords who repay loyalty with gold, and followers who repay generosity with loyalty (see also Vestergaard 1990 throughout). Clearly, exchange was one of the core metaphors for many social relationships. People did not always rely on this metaphor, nor did they use it consistently, but they invoked it strategically in many different contexts.

Marcel Mauss' famous model for gift-exchange fits Viking Age feuds

well: parties maintain a relationship for as long as one owes the other something; repayments are usually delayed; and obligations shift back and forth (Mauss 2011, 50 and throughout). Mauss imagined that gift exchange limited violence, but more recent ethnography stresses the reverse logic: exchange based-relationships can sour and lead to feuds or be used to build military alliances mobilised in feuds (see Corbey 2006 throughout, Wiessner 2006, 181). Thus, conflict and exchange are complementary, and revenge is a mirror-image of the Maussian gift: the recipient of a gift owes goods to his donor, and will be condemned as an untrustworthy miser if he fails to pay up; the avenger owes harm to his opponent, and will be condemned as an untrustworthy coward if he fails to strike back. Both failures erode social bonds because they prove the debtor untrustworthy, but they reflect reverse logics: a debtor owes gifts to his allies, and will lose those allies if he fails to meet his obligations; an avenger owes revenge to his enemies *for* his allies, and he will lose his allies (not his enemies) if he fails his obligations. Unlike most celebrated examples of big-man gift economies, revenge often spans generations: a person cannot avenge his own death, and (legendary and fictive) boys including Sinfiötli and Sigurd grew up to avenge their grandparents or parents.

In legend, revenge is a painstakingly precise exchange: Loki made one of Odin's sons kill the other, so Odin made one of Loki's sons kill the other. Loki's actions exiled Baldur to the lands of the dead, underground, so Loki was imprisoned underground. Both Loki and Baldur are prophesised to return at the end of the world (*Völuspá* 51, 62). Baldur's wife died of a broken heart and joined him in death, and Loki's wife joined him in his prison. Regin planned to kill Sigurd and take the gold, so Sigurd killed Regin and took the gold. Regin's information made Sigurd kill Fafnir and Fafnir's information and blood made Sigurd kill Regin. Atli killed King Gunnar and Högni, extinguishing the Burgundian royal, male line, and Gurdun killed King Atli and his two sons, extinguishing the Hun royal, male line. Atli had Högni's and Hialli's hearts cut out, and Gudrun cut out Atli's two sons' hearts. Wayland was maimed and imprisoned, losing his mobility, so he made wings, regaining mobility. Wayland, a king's son, was enslaved, made into property, so he made King Nidud's sons into cups and jewels, property. The King took away the goods Wayland produced, so Wayland took away the dynasty the King produced. Wayland's enslavement prevented contact with his wife, and Wayland's rape prevented contact between the King and his daughter.

In realistic narratives, revenge is a lot less precise, and often initiates new cycles of violence.

In legend, women sometimes take revenge directly (Gudrun in *Atlaskviða*, Borghild in *Frá dauða Sinfjötla*). More often, especially in realistic literature, women encourage men to revenge (Brynhild in *Sigurðskviða in skama*, Gudrun in *Guðrúnarhvöt*, Halgerd and Bergthora in *Njals saga* ch. 35–41; see below). Men usually take revenge directly, alone or with allies. Women often use arson or poison (Gudrun in *Atlaskviða*, *Völsunga saga* ch. 40, Borghild in *Frá dauða Sinfjötla*, *Völsunga saga* ch. 10) while men use weapons or animals (Atli's snakes, Siggeir's wolf). In legend, both sexes commit hidden murders and declare their actions later. In realistic narratives, killers take pains to avoid any accusation of clandestine murder by seeking witnesses and declaring their actions (cf. Miller 1983, note 2). In religious mythology, physical violence seems to be the preserve of male gods, while goddesses manipulate fate (cf. Quinn 2006, throughout).

The legends of Wayland and Nidud, Gudrun and Atli are especially illustrative, because the plots are so similar: both Wayland and Gudrun were royals away from home, both were mistreated by kings, both killed the kings' sons and made cups of their skulls. Yet, the consequences differed dramatically: Wayland replaced Nidud's dynasty with his own (cf. Murdoch 1996, 54ff), Gudrun destroyed hers and Atli's dynasty and kingdom. Wayland's revenge was justified and socially constructive, Gudrun's was justified but socially destructive. Wayland left legend laughing, Gudrun spend poem after poem bemoaning her fate. Similarly, Sigurd's killing of Regin and Fafnir allowed him to build a marriage and an alliance with the Burgundians; Brynhild's revenge destroyed all this, and her own household. During Signy's and Sigmund's revenge, Signy lost two sons and died, while Sigmund gained a son and survived. Borghild's revenge destroyed her marriage (most clearly in *Völsunga saga* ch. 10).

The association between women and socially destructive violence also appears in the saga feuds. The sagas explain individual acts of violence as part of long histories of complex kinship (cf. Byock 1982, 114ff). These feuds are unpredictable: no invariant rules dictate if parties will continue a feud or be reconciled, nor is it obvious who will be asked to avenge whom. As well as fighting, saga feuds include juridical and political efforts. Parties sue for injuries at public assemblies, mediators try to negotiate compensation and avoid retaliation, and both sides recruit allied legal counsel, voting blocks and potential fighters to their side. Recruitment draws on all kinds of

relations: biological kin, kin by marriage, fictive kin (foster parents, foster children, oath brothers), households and friends (see Miller 1983, 166ff, Byock 1982, 75ff). Thus feuds often involve significant numbers of people. Since women normally did not have any voice in the assembly, these actions are dominated by men, though women may be central references for recruitment of kin by marriage.

In contrast, women play a central role as mourners and goaders (see Byock 1982, 94f, Miller 1983, 175ff, Clover 1986 throughout, and Clark 2012, ch. 1, for examples and analysis). Clover (*ibid.*, 174) argues that women accepted this role, precisely because they had no legal agency. In the sagas, there is a standard trope of a woman demanding that specific men involve themselves and take aggressive action in response to past violence. Very often, the men so goaded express their desire to avoid involvement. Miller (1983, 183f) and Clover (1986, 174) argue that widows, especially, had a legitimate interest in revenge because they had little or no claim on compensation. Very often, goading women rely on one of two arguments: an argument from solidarity, claiming that the victim would have avenged the man addressed, had conditions been reversed, or an argument from honour, claiming that accepting compensation is dishonourable and unmanly. This theme is developed in *Njálsaga*, where the farmwife Hallgerd satirises Njal's beardlessness and Skarp-Hedin replies that "We [men] are not women, flying into rages at everything" (ch. 44; cf. Millar 1983, note 87) and the widow Hildingunnr charge her uncle Flosi to avenge her husband, by Christ and by Flosi's manhood (*mannþóm*), provoking Flosi's remark that "Cold are the councils of women" (ch. 116).

Clover (1986, 154 and 161) argues that women's mourning and goading formed a continuum, so that any lament for the unavenged dead became an implicit goading, and that goading fulfilled women's duty to mourn. The Gudrun poems reflect these themes, most explicitly when Gudrun goads Hamdir and Sörli to kill Jormunrekk. Likewise, Brynhild goads Gunnar and his brothers to kill Sigurd, although no surviving poems detail her efforts. Clover (*ibid.*, 145) documents that goaders were admired as heroes, their spoken performances on par with the physical acts of men, even though both the law and the church discouraged revenge (*ibid.*, 144)

Most of our evidence for feuding comes from Iceland, a society with no executive authority. The relevant legends play out in an extreme elite environment where, again, people could appeal to no higher power. In more organised polities, feuding may have been limited, and Norwegian law, especially, suggests that emerging

kingdoms sought to limit feuding (*ibid.*).

Though the goading motif is central to the sagas, no-one has recognised it in images. Gudrun and Brynhild both play this role at different times, but the closest relevant interpretation is Buisson's reading of Ardre VIII as illustration of *Hamdirsmál* (rejected above). Even here, Gudrun's role as a goader is not illustrated. Again, this supports the observation that women's violence was rarely depicted.

I argue that this destructive nature of women's violence in stories structured how people lived their real, gendered lives in relation to violence.

Legend, literature and reality

The legends described above are not descriptions of everyday life. The poisons and dragons, skull-cups and snake-pits have no archaeological equivalent, and probably never existed. Yet, legends provided people with ideals that informed their real-life choices. Here, I shall focus on two aspects of this, practice and success.

"Practice" describes both training and actions. As people practice the same skills again and again, they become practiced and the skills become practical solutions for these people. Specifically, if some people practice the techniques of violence again and again, they will eventually become skilled at violence, confidently able to use it as a practical solution in conflicts. Practice transforms bodies and minds, and violence is most easily used strategically by those skilled at and de-sensitised to it (see Sofaer 2006, 83ff, Scheper-Hughes and Bourgeois 2004, 14f). The highly problematic, late Viking Age poem *Rígspula* describes characteristic bodies and work for slave, free and noble men and women, and associates violence firmly with noble men.

"Success" is always defined in local terms. All strategies have results, but not all results are recognised as successes, and society's recognition of success may well depend on gender, class and other factors. Today, biker gangs, football hooligans, drunken youth, and German university *Mensur* duelling societies respect fighters, while other minorities (Jains, Quakers, secular pacifists, humanists) respect those who consistently reject violence. Such understandings are typically both class-and gender-specific: until a few decades ago, brawls were a tolerated if not celebrated part of young, working-class men's lives in Scandinavia. Some centuries ago, university towns saw endless, violent clashes between students (male upper-class) and crafts guild apprentices and journeymen (male middle-class). Yet, even then,

most young women were prevented from brawling. Similarly, violent sports show a strong and consistent class and gender bias: wrestling and boxing remain proletarian and masculine, and champions are more often butchers or builders than doctors or lawyers, men rather than women. Until very recently, women could not box professionally at all, could not compete and therefore, could not win. Consequently, a person could only be recognised as a successful boxer if they were already recognised as a man.

When both practice and success are gendered, people of each gender must master specific skills and achieve specific results to be recognised as successful adult members of their gender. Thus, in much of early 20th century Europe, men were drafted for military service, and expected to earn honourable discharge. Some men went on to have military careers, and have their successful relationship with violence officially recognised through promotions and medals. Military service was not expected of women, often not legally possible for them, and states that rewarded military experience with privileged access to civilian jobs also selectively favoured men (e.g. the post-war US, the German Democratic Republic).

In Viking Age society, gendered violence worked on two levels:

First, the strategic use of violence involved legal as well as physical acts. Women were generally denied any public, legal agency, and would have to let their male kin speak for them in assemblies (see Miller 1983, 181ff for examples and detailed analysis). Exceptionally, women might speak in assemblies if they had no living adult, male kin, but few women, if any, practiced law enough to become recognised authorities. This severely limited their ability to use violence strategically: no matter what they actually did, they would need a man to interpret their actions in legal terms. Men had far more agency, and supposedly manipulated their enemies into attacks that they could use to excuse their own violent responses. They certainly modified their own violent actions to conform to legal expectations (cf. Clark 2012, 149f).

Second, other evidence suggests that elite men, far more than women, trained for violence, physically and psychologically. The male elite were buried and depicted as archers, swordsmen and horsemen, all of which are skills that demand a lot of training to be used successfully in fights. Women were buried and depicted as unarmed, in wagons, rather than with the stirrups and saddles used in war. Most likely, some women did ride, and some female warriors may have existed, but women were not much encouraged to practice fighting skills. Legendary sources suggest that women were respected as

potentially murderous, but they are rarely described as skilled fighters (but cf. *Atlamál in groenlansko* 50–51: Gudrun fought like a man).

I argue that women were discouraged from learning and exercising the relevant physical and intellectual skills for violent success. I argue further that even if women did use violence strategically, their results were unlikely to be recognised as *their* successes. I argue, finally, that images actively reinforced this gendered understanding of violence.

Conclusion

Viking Age societies created public images that celebrated clever men and their clever use of violence, encouraging men to use violence cleverly. The same images gave no impression that women could do this. Instead, mythological texts suggested that women's violent plans were likely to succeed, but unlikely to benefit themselves or society much. Legends and sagas suggested that tragedies followed whenever emotional women had too much influence over rational men. The manuscript literature suggest that women's emotions were respected as potentially very destructive, but that, for that very reason, women were not expected to act directly. Instead, women were portrayed as making emotional demands for violence which had to be filtered through men's rationality, legal and strategic experience. Although texts recognised women's physical and emotional capability, they also encouraged them to entrust physical and legal action to men. Literature portrayed independently violent women as dangerous to themselves and to society. Such women were not celebrated in art.

Monuments never convincingly show women taking revenge. I suggest that this reflects their context: if these monuments were made for the commemoration of dead, highly respected members of the community, they may reflect edited and selective biographies, much like modern obituaries do. If strategic revenge was recognised as an admirable skill for men, only, women would never be commemorated for their successful revenge because local logic suggested that a woman's revenge could not be truly successful, and successful revenge could not be a woman's achievement.

Mythological literature is not a realistic source for the reality of everyday lives, but read carefully, it can reveal the ideals that informed these lives and the choices that were foreclosed even before they could be made. Scandinavian myth is full of destructive women, but that does not mean that they were typical of everyday life in the Viking World, any more than the cynical detectives and femmes fatales of *crime noir* were typical of the real 1930s.

Perspectives

The logic described above mirrors that of Ancient Greece and Victorian England, where men were seen as rational and women as emotional. As Guilia Sissa (2008, 130) has shown, in Ancient Greek literature, this means that literature's women are psychologically far more interesting than men: the women have complex emotions, the men only have strategies. In Scandinavian legend, "good" men have good, successful strategies that build strong societies with themselves on top, "bad" men have bad strategies that fail and result in breakdowns and chaos (see also Murdoch 1996, 33ff). Women have psychology, and we may speculate that e.g. Gudrun's destructive quest for revenge for her daughter Svanhild is tied up with both her sorrow over Sigurd's death, and her own bitter experience of being falsely accused of infidelity at Atli's court. In more realistic sagas, people of both sexes may have good intentions, yet fail to realise them, and morality becomes a grey zone. Thus, men like Njal and Gunnar in *Njálsaga* reveal psychological struggles between their stated desire for peace and their socially sanctioned ambitions for power.

The Viking Age narrative frame of violence differs markedly from that described by Judith Butler in her analysis of modern western discourse (Butler 2009, throughout). Butler argues that modern rhetoric creates a divide between those who can and those who cannot be grieved in public. Here, some people are presented as "not really alive" and their deaths are therefore acceptable, even desirable, while other people are presented as truly alive, their deaths tragic. In contrast, Viking Age literature assumes that legitimate targets of revenge are equals to the people being avenged. Deaths on either side must be equally real, and victims equally human. In these texts, antagonists are not dehumanised or demonised. On the contrary, the protagonist avengers in these texts become as brutal and as cruel as their antagonists, as when Gudrun's and Wayland's kill their enemies' children. Interestingly, although *Atlamál in groenlansko* specifically names Gudrun and her brothers as paragons, Scandinavians also named their sons after Atli. Here, the antagonist is not a villain, and the violence is a meaningful social context of skill and ambition, not a moral struggle against senseless evil.

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Manuscript texts: These are available in many different translations. I have used J. L. Byock's 1999 translation of *Völsunga saga* (*The saga of the Volsungs*) and Byock's 2005 translation of *The Prose Edda* (also called the Younger Edda or the Edda of Snorri Sturlusson), both published by Penguin Classics, London; C. Larrington's 1996 translation of *The Poetic Edda*

(also called the Elder Edda or the Edda of Sæmundr the White), published by Oxford University Press, Oxford; and M. Magnusson's and H. Palsson's translation of *Njals saga*, 1960, published by Penguin Classics, London. However, readers should be able to find the relevant texts and chapters in any translation. The manuscript texts cited here are:

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Fafnirsmál: The lay of Fafnir, in *The Poetic Edda*.

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Guðrúnarhvöt: The whetting of Gudrun, in *The Poetic Edda*.

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Chapter 11

The weapons make the man? A re-analysis of early Anglo-Saxon weapon burial and interpretation

Laura M. Whitehouse

Introduction

Burial archaeology has long been used to provide insights into the lives of past peoples and societies. The analysis of material culture and skeletal evidence can shed light on aspects of identity, culture and socio-political relationships. One prominent identity that has been extrapolated from funerary evidence is that of the “warrior”, usually associated with the deposition of weapons alongside the deceased. The tradition of weapon deposition within inhumations has been noted in burials dating far back into prehistory (Whitehouse 2006) and remained in use into the historical period. These “weapon burials” were a feature of “Germanic society following the Roman interlude” (Treherne 1995, 106) and appear regularly within numerous mortuary settings.

This study will examine the weapon burial rite within the context of early Anglo-Saxon England. This will be conducted using a database analysis of osteological and material evidence from 1016 individuals from 5th–8th century East Anglia and Lindsey (created as part of the author’s doctoral study). The aim of the chapter is to investigate and test the supposition that weapon deposition correlates with a warrior identity – the “weapon equals warrior” theory. The individuals within the dataset will be examined in reference to a perceived “warrior” profile and the applicability of this epithet. The early Anglo-Saxon period and the regions of East Anglia and Lindsey offer an ideal

setting for this study given the extensive excavation of cemetery sites and the availability of records deriving from these. However, it is necessary to emphasise that the method employed here can be applied to a variety of burial evidence from numerous chronological and geographical contexts.

Weapon graves and the “weapon equals warrior” phenomenon

“Warrior” graves represent just one of many burial types that have been extrapolated from the interpretation of funerary evidence, often through the analysis of grave goods. Grave goods are ascribed meaning when found in a certain context and are usually cognitively associated with a particular demographic or social group. Thus the interpretation of material culture in many cases involves a subconscious reaction which connects an item to a particular action or trait, such as weapons with warfare and jewellery with beautification. There are issues that surround the interpretation of burial data, however, as scholars inevitably apply varying weight to the relative value of various evidence types, such as cemetery morphology and taphonomy, grave good evidence, and skeletal data. This potential limitation has been highlighted in numerous contexts, with previous studies of burial data noting that the insights provided by grave goods may have been over-emphasised in the past, and drawn upon to reach conclusions that cannot be substantiated by alternative evidence (Crass 2001; Henderson 1989; Sørensen 1992). It is the indeterminate interpretation of material culture that leaves a polysemic outcome and it is the task of the archaeologist to try and decipher this message. Many studies have attempted to address the meaning of grave goods (including weapons) and to establish the factors which determined the deposited grave goods as well as exactly who was responsible for the deposition of these items (Härke 1997; Philpott 1991; Stoodley 1999).

The “weapon equals warrior” approach can be seen as an extension of these practices, whereby grave goods have been used as clear indicators of identity. Its origins are somewhat elusive, which is interesting considering the widespread use of the approach. Weapons have been recovered from burial contexts across numerous periods, cultures and regions and there are a collection of different motivations offered to explain this practice (Härke 2004). The most commonly associated rationalisation involves the affirmation of a warrior identity from the recovery of weapons within the grave assemblage. Ruth Whitehouse (2006, 744), for example, suggests that the study of

Bronze Age weapon burials in Europe spurred the interpretation of “an elite warrior ideology in which male power and status are based on an association (literal or metaphorical) with prowess in warfare”. However, some issues have arisen in the interpretation of these burials. The direct correlation of weapons with a warrior identity has altered the perception of weapon graves, as they became perceived as an indicator of a “warrior” lifestyle regardless of the validity of the interpretation (Arnold 2006). Numerous other scholars have also questioned the integrity of the approach (Berseneva 2008; Härke 1990; Whitley 2001). David Fontijn (2005, 152), for example, believes that “weapon evidence confronts us first and foremost with its ideological and ritual dimensions” and that we should “consider warrior-hood as an essentially temporary identity, reserved for special situations and contexts only”. In reference to early Anglo-Saxon England, warrior burials and the “weapon equals warrior” approach have been extensively considered by a number of scholars (e.g. Härke 1989, 1990, 2004; Shepherd 1999), with some (Lucy 1997; Mortensen 2004) advocating the need to re-evaluate evidence in order to attain a more balanced and comprehensive interpretation of the past.

As noted above, the main aim of this study is to examine the applicability of this “warrior” identity within a broad dataset. Essentially, this approach was designed to re-evaluate the “warrior” association with weapons within an existing database of cemeteries instead of an intended search for “warriors”. Gender and sex are inextricably linked to this approach, as the recovery of weapons is customarily used a marker for male sex regardless of the osteological evidence within the grave. This relates to gender as the assignation of the “warrior” identity involves a circular train of thought that has been identified in some studies of early Anglo-Saxon archaeology (Gilchrist 2009; Lucy 1997; Thomas *et al.* 2006). This involves the discovery of a grave with poorly preserved skeletal remains alongside a weapon assemblage, which is then used as an indicator of the male sex and in turn is used as confirmation of a “warrior” persona. This promotes the belief that the discovery of weapons in Anglo-Saxon burial contexts is all that is required to identify a male “warrior” regardless of the reliability or validity of the supposition. This approach and the romanticised image of the “warrior” have added little to the discipline as a whole, other than reinforcing the fact that interpretations must be built on more than idealisations of material culture (Whitley 2002). It is reasonable to assume that the connection between weapon burial and the male warrior persona represents a preconception that has permeated archaeological interpretation for

many years. As scholars of gender archaeology attest, a clear male bias existed within burial archaeology and ancient demographics (Conkey and Spector 1984; Díaz-Andreu 2005).

Gender bias and heteronormativity

Since the 1980s, the potential of gender bias to heavily skew archaeological interpretation has become increasingly apparent. Don Brothwell (1981, 59) states that “a 12 per cent bias in favour of males” exists in the excavation of human remains, which may be linked to the use of imperfect burial data compiled without accurate skeletal analysis and under the influence of stereotyped grave assemblages. It is believed this is due to the tendency of past excavators to search and find men more commonly than women as their graves were assumed to be the richer ones (Nelson 2003). A well-known example of this was seen at the high-status Iron Age burial at Vix in Burgundy, France, which was interpreted as belonging to a male transvestite priest until later skeletal analysis showed the individual instead to be female (Arnold 1991). The perpetuation of gender stereotypes can be seen in many archaeological contexts within cross-cultural paradigms such as the male hunter and the female gatherer dichotomy at the Indian Knoll site in Kentucky, c. 7000–2000 BC (Doucette 2001). Although many of these assumptions can be inextricably linked to material culture, in some instances they can be challenged but not completely overturned. In early Anglo-Saxon burials, for example, swords tend to be found in the graves of people osteologically determined as male, whereas spindle whorls tend to be found in the graves of individuals osteologically determined as female (Stoodley 1999). It seems unwise to deny the correlation between certain types of objects and skeletally determined anatomical sex (Arnold and Wicker 2001) but there are limits to the reliability of these associations. Even though these are valid observations that statistics have loosely confirmed, criticism rests on the implementation of this approach without the osteological determination of sex. Although it may be foolish to ignore these statistical correlations, the association of sexual stereotypes with certain grave goods may not adhere to a simple binary division as it may first appear (Díaz-Andreu 2005). It is the assumption of sex without skeletal evidence that must be challenged first, in order to present the demographics of the past more accurately and without bias or presumption. Most importantly, regardless of statistical correlation, assemblage categorisation cannot be relied upon as a way

of reaching a definitive sexual classification. This is especially relevant in cases like the Vix burial, where sex and gender are cross-matched and misinterpreted (Arnold 2001). There are many instances however, in numerous geographical and chronological contexts, which involve individuals who do not conform to traditional sex/gender roles. This has been discussed in detail by Bo Jensen (2007), who highlights the potential variance in the social and cultural profiles of individuals who do not adopt binary sex stereotypes. These include the Native American Berdache, the Indian hijra and the Byzantine eunuch who all, at some point, disregarded their biological sex in order to adopt the social and material trappings of their gender opposite (Gilchrist 1999). In archaeological terms, individuals within this category may be identified through the deposition of grave goods traditionally associated with their sexual counterpart (Díaz-Andreu 2005). Although, these instances of “confused” burial may be infrequent, they represent an area of archaeology that has been overlooked (for a summary see Arnold 2001) and a need to categorise individuals who may have obscured actual demographics by perpetuating the same social group structure.

As noted above, there has been a tendency within some past studies of early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries to exclude data which does not “fit” into the groupings of sex, gender, age, pathology, burial assemblage and grave orientation (Penn and Bruggmann 2007; Stoodley 1999; West 1988). This has produced analyses and interpretations with disclaimers of fixed or excluded evidence to perhaps avoid an explanation of “confused burials” and anomalous data. This can be seen in numerous cemetery reports from various areas of Anglo-Saxon England such as Evison (1987), Green *et al.* (1987) and West (1988). This “smoothing” of burial data may in certain instances have produced cemetery interpretations which do not accurately reflect the society of buried individuals, especially in terms of sex and gender determinations. The issue mainly arises from the assumption that the goods found within the grave of the individual can display aspects of social and cultural information, which can be used to formulate an accurate profile of the deceased (Knüsel and Ripley 2000). This is, of course, subject to considerable criticism because of the potential limitations of the evidence. In more extreme cases, the interpretation of “confused” burials can be affected by the rejection of skeletal evidence in preference to material culture. Vera Evison’s (1987) Dover Buckland cemetery report gives an excellent example of how “confused” burials have been approached within an Anglo-Saxon context. The author describes a double grave (Fig. 11.1) thought

initially on osteological grounds to contain one male and one sexually indeterminable individual both with weapon assemblages (Evison 1987, 124). The osteological evidence recovered from this double grave varied considerably for each individual. The skeletal remains from Grave 96a were missing many of the vertebrae, ribs, pelvic, hands and feet bones. Conversely, these bones were present for the individual labelled as 96b. A post-excavation reanalysis of the human remains was undertaken by Rosemary Powers and Rachel Cullen from the British Museum, who determined that the grave contained one possible male and one definite female (Evison 1987, 123). Evison (1987) dismissed the second of these analyses on the basis of the accompanying assemblage, arguing that the pair should be interpreted as a homosexual male couple. For her, this was the most simple and credible explanation, thus avoiding the need to explain a female with a weapon assemblage or challenge the male-weapon stereotype. This restrictive interpretation exudes heteronormativity; whereby the traditional gender roles of man and woman are left unchallenged (Yates 1993). Interestingly by dismissing the likelihood that other gender roles may have existed, the concept of heterosexuality is forfeited (Joyce 2008).

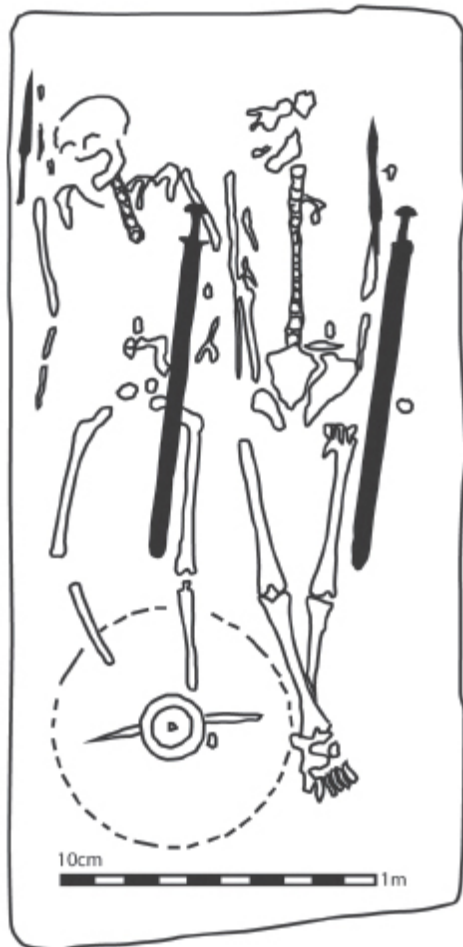


Figure 11.1. Dover, Buckland Cemetery: Grave 96a and 96b (adapted from Evison 1987, 348).

Even when archaeological approaches evolve, it is possible to see the replacement of one “causal relationship” with another, depending upon the personal bias of the interpreter. Citing the work of Härke (1990, 1992, 1995) for example, Tyrrell (2000a, 154) notes how the concept of “weapon equals warrior” is dismissed in favour of an ethnically-derived supposition – that “weapon equals Germanic descent or ethnicity”. Essentially, this point reiterates the fact that too much emphasis may have been placed on the value of grave goods. This is especially resonant considering alternative theories of possession, gift or inheritance. There is no definitive evidence that can substantiate the links between grave goods and social conditions or identity. The meaning of “weapon burial” is no clearer than any other act conducted by agents of the past without literary confirmation or

oral history. There may have been complex mechanisms at play that determined the content of burial assemblages, from the assertion of certain ethnicities to the indication of social roles and the identification of particular occupations. There is, however, no existing data that can prove the meaning behind burial assemblages either way, but that by no way means we should stop trying.

In the case of perceived “warrior burials”, these need to have only contained a weapon assemblage to be branded as such. The widespread identification of so-called “warriors” seems to have resulted from an interpretive decision made with limited evidence (Gilchrist 1999). It may be that a number of individuals found alongside weapon assemblages in the early Anglo-Saxon period were classified correctly as “warriors”. However, as discussed below, in order to make this assertion, the evidence would need to include more than a weapon assemblage and a tentative sexual estimation as male (Härke 1990). This is mainly due to the ambiguity and uncertainty that surrounds the interpretation of material culture and the decisions behind its deposition. Every grave assemblage may, potentially, have an individual meaning that could vary depending upon any particular burial variable. This is clearly applicable to weapon burials which could present a myriad of meanings in addition to the “warrior” identity (Härke 1990). It is, therefore, more of a question of theoretical logic and interpretative homogeneity rather than archaeological accuracy. If females found alongside weapons were not accorded the same classification of “warrior” this puts all sexual identifications made in that case in contention (Lucy 1997).

This is also apparent outside of the early Anglo-Saxon world where the correlation between weapon deposition and “warrior” identity is selectively applied depending upon the burial context of the individual. For instance, weapon parts recovered from a late Pleistocene multiple child burial in Alaska were interpreted as ritualised gifts and therefore not assigned the warrior classification (Potter *et al.* 2014). Conversely, weapons recovered from Chinese Bronze Age graves were used as evidence for an engendered division of labour between female textile workers and male “warriors” (Rode 2004). This context was similar to the original interpretation made of Indian Knoll weapon burials which held atlatls (Doucette 2001). The interpretation of these atlatl depositions also show the male bias associated with this grave type as although they are recovered with both sexes and children, only those buried alongside the males were classified as practical possessions of the deceased. In the cases of the females and children, the atlatls were interpreted as ritual deposits

made by males who were mourning their death (Webb 1946).

Osteoarchaeology and the warrior

Given the inherent issues highlighted above, the database utilised in this study was designed as a platform for multi-faceted analysis whereby different burial attributes could be effectively examined for correlations and anomalies. More than a simple resource for researchers and a template for further study, the database can be used to illustrate the skewed nature of certain cemetery data and the effect this can have on interpretation. The concepts of “confused burial” and “deviant” graves have precipitated the need to challenge the nature of burial data especially in cases where osteological and material evidence do not “fit”. This in turn has spurred a reanalysis and reinterpretation of graves that have previously been labelled as anomalies or simply left undiscussed. This, in part, demonstrates why the “weapon equals warrior” theory was an obvious choice for this chapter as the corresponding database provides the opportunity to test cemetery statistics against sexual stereotypes. The treatment of “confused” burials in cemetery reports is the main reason behind the focus of this research and demonstrates the marginalisation of individuals the database was designed to avoid.

This study investigates the “weapon equals warrior” theory through the approach, devised by Joanna Sofaer (2006), of studying the body as material culture. This involves skeletal evidence being analysed culturally as well as biologically in the same way that material evidence is used. As Sofaer (2006, xv) explains, “throughout the life course the human skeleton may be modified through intentional or unintentional human action ... bodies are literally created through social practices.” A clear-cut representation of this can be seen through the examination of occupational markers and muscle attachments on the skeleton. Occupational markers are generated when repetitive activity alters the muscle attachments to the bones, providing evidence of strenuous activities undertaken in life (Byers 2005). Essentially, the more strenuous the activity and the more often it is undertaken, the more likely it is to leave evidence on the bone. Therefore, enlarged muscle attachments are indicative of repeated human actions and can therefore help to reconstruct habitual activities (Knüsel 2011). An example of this type of analysis and its potential results can be seen from the investigations of the human remains recovered from the *Mary Rose* warship. The skeletal evidence was examined for pathological conditions, trauma and occupational

markers in order to gain an insight into the lives of the individuals aboard (for a detailed report see Stirland 2005). It was discovered that the “non-union [of the acromial epiphysis in the shoulder] was the result of the movements necessary for archery, and practising this from an early age may prevent fusion of the epiphysis” (Roberts and Manchester 2005, 104–105). As with every aspect of osteological analysis, preservation determines the amount of recoverable information. Poor preservation has, in the past, opened burial interpretation to uncensored bias, especially when assigning sex, social status and vocation. Therefore, when weapon assemblages have been recovered alongside poorly preserved skeletal remains, the status of “warrior” has been heedlessly applied. Alternative explanations have been offered to comprehend the fixation on the “warrior” classification whether that involved the adoption of a particular lifestyle (Steuer 1989), individual unfulfilled aspirations (Ardrey 1961) or the representation of ethnicity or family status (Härke 1992, 2007). However, the evidence to support a “warrior” claim would need to include “morphological studies ... to reconstruct activity-related skeletal adaptation” if we were to ever understand the differentiation between the symbolic and the literal “warrior” (Knüsel 2011, 222). This would involve a two-fold analysis of the weapon grave assemblage with an identification of osteological markers associated with a “warrior” lifestyle, on the assumption that this identity was based on experience and not aspiration. There are however, restrictions on the success of these osteological assessments as low preservation of skeletal remains can reduce the integrity of bone and obscure the results.

To develop this “warrior” template, one of the most obvious qualities a person would need to possess would be the physical capacity for armed combat; the ability to defend and attack in a melee situation with the use of weapons (Härke 1990). This trait in itself requires certain physical attributes that would need to be present such as stature and strength enough to lift and manoeuvre a weapon (Underwood 2001). This implies that in order to be of “warrior” status an individual would need to have reached an appropriate level of skeletal and muscular maturity (e.g. post pubescence) and have grown to a reasonable enough stature to use the weapons they were buried alongside. This would indicate a physically able individual of approximate “adult” physical maturity, thereby unconsciously questioning the deposition of weapon assemblages within child graves.

The stature of so-called “warriors” from the early Anglo-Saxon period has been analysed in detail in the past. Heinrich Härke (1990)

used cemetery data to compile a database of information taken from males found with weapons burials. In this instance, Härke (1990) examined the evidence and concluded that although the “weapon equals warrior” approach had no standing in his analysis, the male individuals within his database could be ranked by their stature and associated weapons. The individuals found with the most extensive weapon assemblages were also found to have the largest stature. The conclusion made from this data was that the comparably larger stature was an attribute of Germanic ethnicity and congenital inheritance that was also associated with the more extensive weapon sets (Härke 1990). The assertion that familial relationships may be linked to weapon burial rites is a precarious one as it very difficult to prove definitively. This is especially true of congenital markers from the postcranial skeleton, as these are subject to alterative stimuli such as environmental factors and nutritional development. Doubt is then understandably cast on conclusions of this type, as the evidence can no longer be taken as incontestable fact; the so-called “congenital” markers may be the result of non-genetic influences and interpreted very differently (Gowland 2002; Tyrrell 2000b). Although there may be criticisms made of the relationship between stature and weapon burials, there was confirmation from a later study conducted by Simon Mays (2012). This project analysed 70 sets of skeletal remains from 16 early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries which confirmed “that males with weapons [were] taller than average stature in England for the period, but ... [were] also taller than mean stature for continental early medieval populations ... [however] if males with weapons [were] of continental descent, then they were not drawn randomly from their parent populations as regards stature” (Mays 2012, 167).

Palaeopathological observations and the warrior profile

The examination of osteoarchaeological evidence can, depending upon the level of preservation, also include an assessment of palaeopathological information. This includes evidence of disease, trauma and activity markers on the skeleton and in the case of suspected “warrior” burials may produce additional data that may support or refute this hypothesis. As discussed above, if a rigorous activity such as weapon training was repeated frequently enough, as expected of a “warrior”, the individual may bear skeletal markers indicative of undertaking training required to become proficient in battle. This would involve a palaeopathological examination of the skeletal remains and an assessment of the activity markers left on the

bone which may indicate repetitive action (Villotte and Knüsel 2013). Although this type of analysis is generally accepted as a very informative way of reliving the skeleton’s most frequent actions, deciphering between different activities may prove more difficult than expected. For example, weapon actions may have used the same calisthenics as certain agricultural activities (Henderson *et al.* 2013). Coincidentally, it is much easier to determine the level of strenuous activity as opposed to the type. However, where the observation of occupation and activity markers may fall short in palaeopathological analysis, the identification of trauma on the skeleton may provide a more justifiable means of “warrior” identification. Luckily, in certain instances, trauma can be recognised in earlier specimens but is usually dependent upon several factors including the burial environment, area of trauma and extent of injury (Haglund and Sorg 2002). Unfortunately, due to the variable preservation levels within archaeological samples, it is not always possible to identify every pathological indicator or indeed classify original aetiologies in every case (Waldron 2009). There are, however, very clear examples of ante- and peri-mortem traumatic injury from various archaeological assemblages, including mass graves such as the Viking execution site of Ridgeway Hill in Dorset (Loe *et al.* 2014), massacre sites such as the fourteen century Crow Creek Massacre in South Dakota (Zimmerman 1997) and evidence of late 18th to early 19th century interpersonal violence from St. Martin’s Churchyard, Birmingham (Brickley *et al.* 2006).

Table 11.1. Data for “warrior” template

Group	Percentage of total database	
Database population	100.00%	1016
Number of graves	n/a	980
Individuals in single inhumations	93.70%	952
Sexed individuals	36.71%	373
Aged individuals	60.83%	625
Males	16.63%	169
Females	20.08%	204
Adults	39.57%	409
Non-adults	21.26%	216
Male adults	13.98%	145
Female adults	16.34%	167
Individuals with grave goods	82.09%	824

Individuals with weapons	22.83%	231
Individuals with bones remaining	71.95%	731
Adults with weapons	11.32%	118
Male adults with weapons	8.46%	89
Female adults with weapons	0.79%	8
Individuals with trauma	1.87%	19
Adults with trauma	1.77%	18
Males with trauma	1.67%	17
Females with trauma	0.20%	2
Individuals with trauma and weapons	0.69%	7
Adults with trauma and weapons	0.59%	6
Males with trauma and weapons	0.59%	6
Females with trauma and weapons	0.00%	0
Male adults with trauma and weapons	0.59%	6

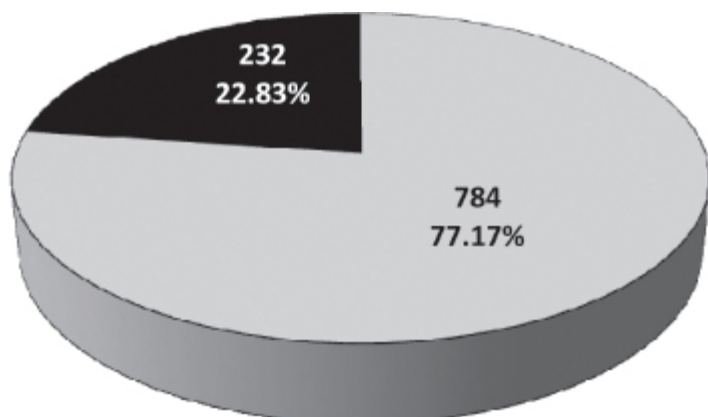


Figure 11.2. A chart showing the frequency of weapon assemblages within the database.

In terms of a “warrior” profile, the extent of trauma to the skeleton may be difficult to estimate. In one sense, a collection of sharp and blunt force trauma would be expected along with evidence of healed injuries from previous incidents (Härke 2004). However, in another

sense, both a proficient “warrior” and an inexperienced combatant may yield few signs of blunt and sharp trauma to skeleton. This type of analysis may also include estimations of cause of death, which would reasonably include weapon injury and fatal trauma. The template created by these attributes forms an idealised version of what would be expected from the skeletal remains of a “warrior”. As with any stereotype however, reality can rarely measure up. This is particularly relevant in this case as the “warrior” attributes were used as a filter for the study database which revealed very few viable contenders from the total population of 1016 individuals. The characteristics detailed above were used to identify potential “warriors”, with weapon burial used as an additional filter. The results are detailed in [Tab. 11.1](#) and [Figs. 11.2](#) to [11.5](#).

Database analysis

The database used for this research comprised of 1016 individuals from eight early Anglo-Saxon cemetery sites. Seven cemeteries were included from East Anglia and one cemetery from Lindsey, the details of which can be found in [Fig. 11.6](#). The data from all sites, except for Lakenheath, was taken from published cemetery reports and complementary materials from original burial records and analyses. The information for Lakenheath cemetery was kindly provided by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service who are currently preparing the cemetery report for publication. Although much of the dataset used for this study and the associated thesis was collected from published cemetery reports, the database only included information obtained using osteological observation for age and sex determinations and so varies from the statistics offered in the available reports.

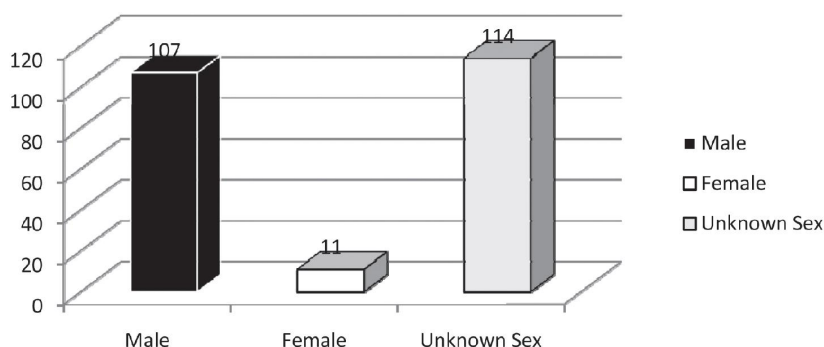


Figure 11.3. A chart showing the sex divisions of individuals with weapon assemblages.

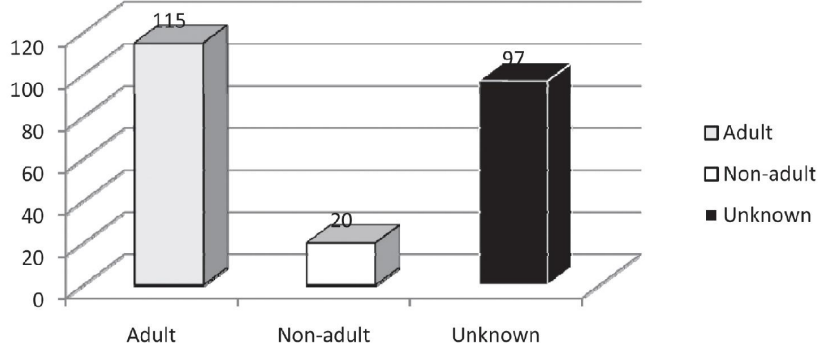


Figure 11.4. A chart showing the age divisions of individuals with weapon assemblages.

Database Burial Attributes

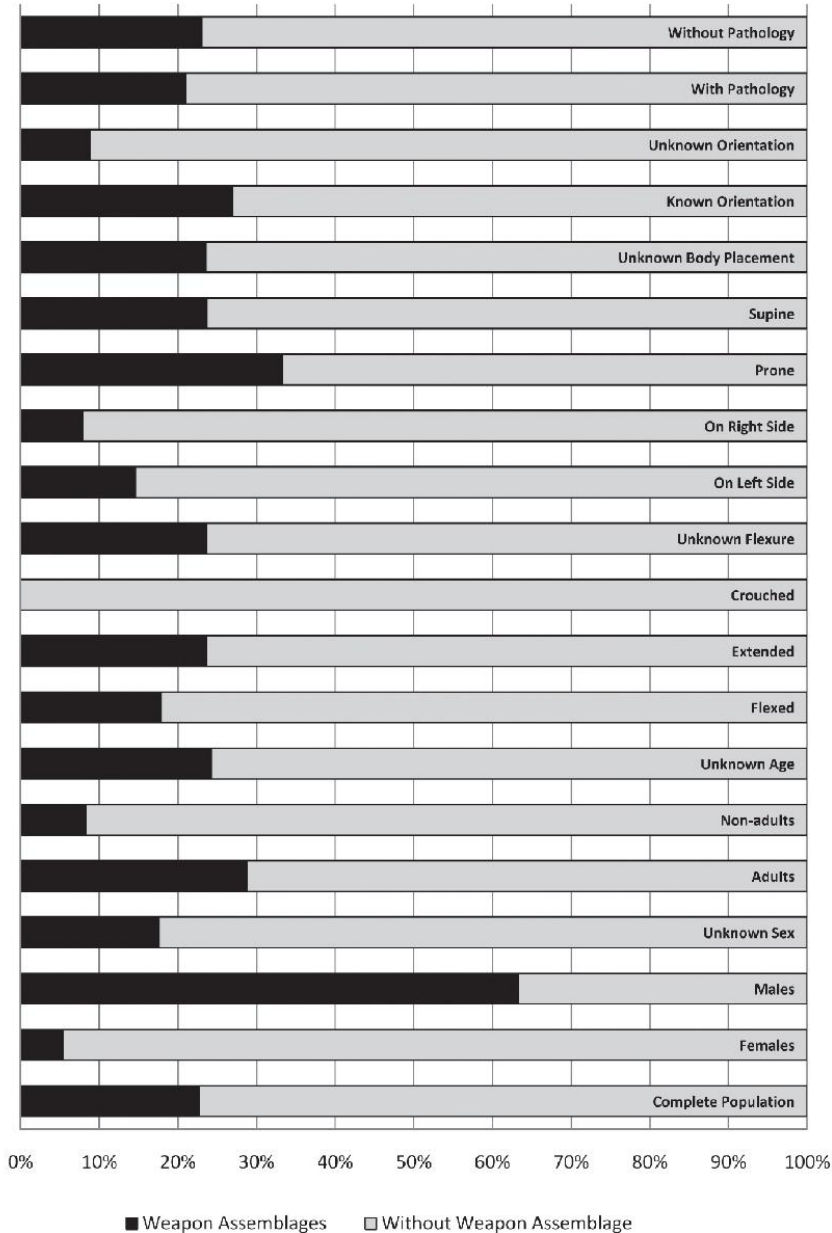


Figure 11.5. A chart showing the profile of weapon assemblages across the database.

Table 11.2. Table showing background information for cemeteries included within the database

Cemetery name	Location	No. of inhumed individuals	Cemetery dates of use	Data origin	Osteologist/ author of bone report
Bloodmoor Hill	Carlton Colville, Suffolk	29	7th–8th century AD	Lucy, S., Tipper, J. and Dickens, A. 2009: <i>The Anglo-Saxon Settlement and Cemetery at Bloodmoor Hill, Carlton Colville, Suffolk</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 131. Cambridge.	Prof. C. Scull
Cleatham	Manton, North Lincolnshire	62	5th–7th century AD	Leahy, K. 2007: 'Interrupting the Pots': <i>The excavation of Cleatham Anglo-Saxon Cemetery</i> . CBA Research Report 155. York.	Ms. B. Jacob and Dr. A. Chamberlain
Great Chesterford	Uttlesford, Essex	171	5th–7th century A.D.	Evison, V. I. 1994: <i>An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Great Chesterford, Essex</i> . CBA Research Report 91. York.	Dr. T. Waldron
Lakenheath	Eriswell, Suffolk	220	c. 5th–8th century AD	Unpublished material provided by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service.	N/A
Morning Thorpe	Norwich, Norfolk	362	5th–7th century AD	Green, B., Rogerson, A. and White, S. G. 1987: <i>The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Morning Thorpe, Norfolk: Volume I & II</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 36. Norfolk.	Dr. J. Mckinley
Snape	Saxmundham, Suffolk	48	6th–7th century AD	Filmer-Sankey, W. and Pestell, T. 2001: <i>Snape Anglo-Saxon Cemetery: Excavations and Surveys 1824–1992</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 95. Suffolk.	Dr. T. Pestell
Spong Hill	North Elmham, Norfolk	58	6th century AD	Hills, C., Penn, K. and Rickett, R. 1983: <i>The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham. Part III: Catalogue of Inhumations</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Report 21. Dereham.	Mrs. G. Putnum
Westgarth Gardens	Bury-St-Edmonds, Suffolk	66	5th–7th century AD	West, S. E. 1988: <i>The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Westgarth Gardens, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk: Catalogue</i> . East Anglian Archaeology Report No. 38. Suffolk.	Mrs G. Putnum

Early Anglo-Saxon East Anglia and Lindsey were chosen as the data sources for the associated doctoral thesis (and consequently this study) in order to gain an insight into inhumation burial in a region where cremation was the dominant rite. Although the area is known for its variable preservation levels, the evidence collected proved substantial enough to construct a database and produce worthwhile statistical analyses. The study, therefore, is a considerable offering to the discipline to complement works such as Pader (1980), Fisher (1995), Jacob (1999) and Penn and Brugmann (2007). Several sites overlap between these studies and the database and so they were used to provide an insight into the cemeteries and the previous discussions. This study is essentially an off shoot from a much larger piece of work

which sits between these publications as a database analysis of inhumation burial and atypical rites. Indeed, the current study personifies the issue the thesis is designed to highlight, that being the need to avoid stereotyping and pigeonholing individuals from burial evidence alone.

In total, 625 individuals could be aged, with 409 adults and 216 non-adults identified. Within the database, 373 individuals could be assigned a sex from osteological analysis; 204 females and 169 males were recorded. Overall, a very large proportion of the database population were found alongside grave goods; 81.10% (824 out of 1016). Within this figure, 231 individuals were found alongside weapon assemblages and were used in reference to the “warrior” profile characteristics. Weapons were classified using a collection of very detailed works, such as Crummy (1983), Philpott (1991), Underwood (2001) and Gowland (2002) and included the following items; arrowheads, axes, bows, seaxes, shields, shield bosses/mounts/studs, spear ferrules, spearheads, spears and swords.

136 of the population found with weapons could be aged successfully; 118 as adults and 18 as non-adults. With regards to sexual identification, 118 individuals were assigned sex and found alongside a weapon assemblage and this figure included 107 males and 11 females. The 11 females (seven definite females and four possible females) showed no signs of trauma and eight were aged as adult with three females of indeterminable age (all at Morning Thorpe cemetery). The 11 females were found at three different sites; one at Westgarth Gardens and five both at Lakenheath and Morning Thorpe. However, all females found with weapons at Morning Thorpe were recovered from multiple graves thereby questioning the association of grave goods between individuals, especially if buried alongside a potential male. Of the remaining six females with weapons, two were classified as definitively sexed; Lakenheath Grave 84 and Westgarth Gardens Grave 4. The first of these included a fully articulated skeleton in a fair condition and was recovered with a spear ferrule along with dress accessories, jewellery and tools. Conversely, Grave 4 at Westgarth Gardens contained only a spear and the individual was consequently sexed as male in the cemetery report although the osteologist had concluded the skeletal remains were from a definite female. This practice was not uncommon in the database as over half of the total population (516 individuals) were accorded sex in the cemetery reports, with 143 individuals being originally sexed by grave goods alone, in addition to the 373 males and females attributed sex from osteological analyses. This can be explored further, as the

population sexed by grave goods can be analysed in terms of weapon burial. For instance, of the 143 individuals sexed by their assemblages, 65 were recorded as male. Within this total, 96.92% (63 individuals) were recovered with weapons within their graves and this was the most common grave good type within the group. This clearly illustrates the abovementioned point; that weapons are so easily taken as indicators of the male sex and rarely challenged. This is especially relevant in this case as male sex has been attributed to 57 of the 63 individuals (90.48%) with weapons even though no traces of skeletal remains were recovered from the graves.

150 individuals recorded in the database have been accorded a sexual classification that does either not match the determination made from the osteological analyses or was attributed even though no skeletal remains were found. 73.33% (110) of the total 150 individuals had no skeletal material recorded whereas the remaining 40 individuals were subject either to contrasting sexual determinations from grave goods and skeletal remains (seven individuals) or were accorded sexual identity purely from their grave assemblages as the osteological analyses proved inconclusive (33 individuals). Along with weapon grave goods, pathology was also assessed as a possible means of identifying a warrior and from the 231 individuals found with weapons, 29 were discovered with some form of pathology. However, of this total, only seven cases were identified as showing evidence of skeletal trauma, which ranged from cuts to fractures to healed lesions.

This group included six adults and one non-adult and were all sexed as male. Three were found at Cleatham and Great Chesterford and the remaining individual was discovered at Westgarth Gardens. These seven individuals were each accompanied by one weapon and found with a knife. The weapon in each grave assemblage was a spear component except for the individual found at Westgarth Gardens who was recovered with a shield boss and attachments. Four of the males had dress accessories included within their assemblage and all but one individual were laid in single graves. The individual found within the double burial was also discovered lying on his right side, unlike the remaining six males who were buried supine. In terms of body flexure, three males were found in an extended position whereas four individuals were placed in a flexed state. In addition, there was no correlation made between grave orientation and any other database filter, except that six of the seven individuals were found between 195° and 331° in a westerly range whereas one individual was recovered on a SSE orientation at 162°. Unfortunately, osteological

assessments made on many of the skeletons did not include detailed information on stature, robusticity or muscle markers and this was mainly due to the low levels of preservation at several of the sites. Stature calculations could only be gathered for 12 individuals at two cemeteries and the estimations ranged from 1.53 m at Great Chesterford to 1.87 m at Cleatham. Stature information was not available from Lakenheath, Morning Thorpe, Snape, Spong Hill or Westgarth Gardens. As this information is neither complete nor conclusive, it adds no dimension to the “warrior” template and can therefore be removed from the discussion temporarily. An important point to note, however, is that average stature can be misleading dependent upon the size of the sample and the method of estimation used. For example, if the sample does not contain a cross-section of society, the average stature is representative only of that selective group. Similarly, when using the mathematical method to estimate stature (equations are used to calculate stature using measurements of the postcranial skeleton) “the body proportions in one’s archaeological sample [must] resemble those in the reference sample used to produce the stature formulae” or they will not provide accurate stature approximations (Mays 2010, 131). It is also not conducive to an individual-centred archaeological analysis as potentially important details can be concealed by the majority. In order to avoid this practice, it is necessary to examine each individual on their own terms (depending upon the level of preservation) to identify any characteristics which can be associated with the stereotypical “warrior” identity.

Five of the six adults within the filtered group were recovered from single graves. To the best of the excavator’s/recorder’s knowledge, the associated assemblages were intended for a specific individual. This is a necessary assessment as in many multiple graves, especially with low preservation levels; it is very difficult to decipher which individual was interred with which grave goods. The meaning associated with them is in turn made difficult to decipher. However, in this case, the graves involved were unintentionally merged together, with one having disturbed an earlier inhumation (Great Chesterford Grave 2b) making it very clear which grave goods were attributed to which individual (Evison 1994). The six male adults were found with a variety of grave goods within their assemblages. All individuals were buried with a knife and five of the six males were buried with a spearhead. Dress accessories such as buckles were included as well as an orthopaedic fitting within Grave 40 at Cleatham cemetery. In terms of other burial attributes, the six male adults

varied in body placement, flexure and orientation. Overall, besides basic sex and age correlations these individuals share few matching criteria but were accorded similar grave assemblages and have the potential to all be classified with the same “warrior” status. As suspected, the “weapons equals warrior” approach cannot be validated in this instance but the filter of attributes can be modified to expose some more viable candidates. For example, the identification of trauma on the skeleton usually indicates injury, accident or assault. Sharp and blunt force trauma is especially useful, as well as instances of fractured and remodelled bone. Due to the limitations of the data sources, palaeopathological information was unobtainable for Lakenheath and Snape cemeteries but was available for the six remaining sites. In total, 19 individuals were found with trauma, of which 18 were adults and 17 were sexed as male and two as female. Seven individuals were found with signs of trauma and were buried with weapons. Of the 12 individuals found with trauma but unaccompanied by a weapon assemblage, one adult male from Great Chesterford (Grave 75) displayed a healed fracture of the left clavicle and a suspected sword injury to his right parietal bone. Despite being rather large at 4 cm², this cranial injury was not fatal as the wound displayed well-healed edges. This shows a possible connection to weapon use, but whether this individual may have undertaken the role we traditionally refer to as “warrior” cannot be determined. Conversely, these injuries may demonstrate this individual was attacked by another of that status. Many theories could be formulated to explain this particular injury both to support and refute the classification of “warrior”. It is the absence of a weapon assemblage that presents the most interesting evidence here as it can be used to question the utilisation of grave goods as indicators of cultural roles and social status. This is especially relevant to the three other individuals found at Great Chesterford, who all showed signs of trauma to the skeleton but were found without grave goods. They each displayed healed fractures and were all sexed as male, aged as adult and found in a supine position.

Conversely, there are many individuals found within the database who were buried alongside weapons but show no traumatic wounds or injuries. 224 individuals in total were recovered with a weapon assemblage but without trauma. 111 could be sexed definitively within this group; 11 of which were deemed female and 100 were sexed as male. Also, 136 of the 224 total were recorded at cemetery sites with available palaeopathological data and six were sexed as female, 61 as male and 69 were of unknown sex. Within this parent

group, 49 adults were recovered with weapons including a total of 43 male adults. The individuals within this filtered sample did not share any other burial attributes that were not evident across the rest of the database population.

Warrior profile results

In terms of the “warrior” template, the six male adults found alongside weapons and displaying signs of trauma prove the most suitable candidates. All six demonstrated fractures with Grave 5 at Cleatham presenting a healed fracture of the left tibia as well as Grave 40 at the same site which held an individual with healed fractures of both the left radius and ulna. The male adult from Grave 2a at Great Chesterford cemetery displayed a well-healed fracture of the left clavicle whilst Grave 101 held an individual with a possible blunt force injury to the left frontal bone which had resulted in a healed lesion of around 2.3 sq cm in diameter. Great Chesterford also produced an individual with a well-healed fracture of a left rib. The remaining individual displaying traumatic pathology was from Grave 8 at Westgarth Gardens, who had sustained a cutting injury to the skull. Within the associated database, these six male adults correspond closest to the “warrior” stereotype. They do, however, also illustrate how difficult it is to find burials which can convincingly carry the “warrior” status with the added reliability of using both osteological and material evidence. The reconsideration of the “warrior” profile indicates that archaeological evidence can only provide so much (Härke 2004). The focus on conflict and weaponry that may have once led interpreters to apply these labels to individuals may have also disguised true demographics with an androcentric “mask”. The purpose of this sample database is not to demonstrate the limitations of archaeological evidence but instead to test the applicability of the “warrior” stereotype. It was this uncertainty which forced the “weapon equals warrior” approach into discredit within archaeology because it “was not arrived at by a systematic analysis of all available data – it was simply an intuitive interpretation” of the grave assemblages recovered (Härke 2004, 1). In an effort to re-evaluate and develop this approach, the “warrior” template was created and applied to a dataset that could be analysed without the bias of previous studies.

This has allowed for a more reliable set of results to be generated, which could be measured against our perceptions of the “warrior”. By using both skeletal and material evidence, the criteria needed to

identify a “warrior” have been redefined to incorporate a much broader interpretation of both grave goods and Anglo-Saxon gender. In a sense this study has provided a base for further research into the “warrior” status that could be used to develop an approach based on the individual. Suggestions for future research would include the use of similar databases from a variety of regions to assess whether the “warrior profile” can be used as a filter for potential “warriors” or whether an alternative set of characteristics could be formulated which could better identify these individuals. There may also be scope to perform a reanalysis of all early Anglo-Saxon weapon burial data from across England in order to produce a demographic profile of the range of individuals accorded this rite. This would also allow more attention to be paid to “alternative” weapon burials such as those which include females.

Conclusion

This study has a principal line of reasoning which emphasises the unreliability of grave goods as indicators of past lives. Scores of analyses share this judgment and have developed ways to counter the over-reliance on material evidence and its perceived associations (for example see Babić 2005; Crass 2001; Joyce 2008; Weglian 2001). There are numerous theories which try to explain the meaning of grave goods and their relationship to social groups and culture but as Sørensen (1989, 121) suggests, it is material culture’s “fluidity of meaning” that may permanently obscure a definitive answer, especially in terms of gender. It has also been suggested that sex may not be the intended attribute that is symbolised by weapons. Instead, ethnicity, family ties, wealth and age have all been offered as alternative qualifications for weapon burial (Stoodley 1999). There are also alternative theories which have convincing premises such as King’s (2004) suggestion that certain goods could be interpreted as votive offerings due to their peculiar placement within the grave. This would help to understand why certain items are placed within burials that could not have been utilised by the deceased, such as weapons in child graves. With this alternate perspective in mind, it is difficult to establish what message was actually being conveyed by the grave goods and who it was intended for. Additionally, it is very important to note that when grave goods are observed and analysed it is not only the beliefs and culture of the past society that are involved but the “presupposition of those who observe, describe, and interpret them” (Smith 1991, 93). This process essentially involves the examination of

a society completely different to our own but also requires the recognition that personal perspectives are ever present within that interpretation (Williams 2011). In addition, it is important to acknowledge that burials with similar characteristics may have very different meanings depending upon particular variables or circumstances. Whitley (2002, 227) also highlights the fact that mortuary practices “are as much occasions in which identities are created or reinforced as they are straightforward outcomes or reflections of contemporary ideas, beliefs or social structures”.

With this in mind, it is easy to criticise the “warrior” stereotype and the rationale behind its application; two main discussions in this study. The assignation of sex, gender, age, ethnicity or any other social classification is a difficult process even in today’s society. The amount of available evidence can sometimes determine the completeness of a profile but can no means guarantee the accuracy of that interpretation or the level to which symbolism is involved. At its core, the need to classify individuals is a natural one. It is a permanent fixture in any society regardless of equality or evolution (Meskell and Preucel 2004). Humans strive to define themselves and each other but in terms of archaeology, grave goods have presented easy access to attractive answers. It is only with the cognitive realisation that people in the past may not be so dissimilar from ourselves that we may start to understand them better.

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Chapter 12

Gender and Structural Violence in Prehistoric Peru

Julie Farnum

Introduction

Bioarchaeology: gender, health, and violence

Bioarchaeology is a useful approach to studying Prehistoric gender, health, violence, and inequality. Although the majority of bioarchaeological studies have focused on documenting specific disorders in past individuals or populations, recent studies have moved towards addressing more complicated issues such as gender and inequality (Bridges 1989, 1991; Cucian and Tiesler 2003; Gagnon 2006; Goodman and Armelagos 1988; Hastorf 1990, 1991, 1993; Klaus 2012; Tung 2013).

Sex-based differences are generally assumed to be biological, but we view them within a cultural context and apply relevant social meanings (Walker and Cook 1998). By examining skeletal remains of females and males in a cultural and social context, we can begin to understand their relationships with each other and their roles in their society (Rautman and Talalay 2000).

Many differences between the genders are seen in the family home. Division of labour commonly falls along gender lines, and the realm of the kitchen is usually dominated, across cultures, by women. Food and its effects on skeletal remains can provide insight into gender relations. For example, chemical analysis of male and female remains can reveal the quality and types of foods eaten by each in life (Hastorf 1990, 1991, 1993, 1999).

We can also study gender and social class roles and relations by examining the architecture and placement of graves, the preparation

and positioning of bodies, and the grave goods that were included, including the remains of attendant individuals (see Beck 1995 and Parker Pearson 1999 for some examples). Social status is indicated by the lack, or presence, of expensive, elaborate mortuary rituals (Brown 1995; Parker Pearson 1999, 84–85).

Human sacrifice

The Andes has a long tradition of human sacrifice. The sacrificed mummified Inca children are the most widely known, but they were just a few in a long line of sacrificial victims. Iconography showing decapitation appears at coastal and highland sites from 1800 BC–AD 1530 (Verano 2001). Sacrifice is usually practiced in dedication to a new structure or building, to control the weather, to venerate ancestors, improve health, or in preparation for war (Bourget 2001). People were often killed by the slashing of the throat with a moon-shaped knife called a *tumi*.

Feminist theory

Feminist theory adds a gender-specific viewpoint to any topic, to understand the differences between men and women and the causes and results of gender inequality, which is typically biased against females. By studying the injuries and health markers of male and female skeletal remains, we can understand how their lives were likely lived. We can then place this physical evidence into the cultural context and compare with grave goods and images in art and iconography to explore class differences as well. The term “intersectionality” is used to describe the examination of the cumulative effects of multiple inequalities, such as gender, class, race, religion or sexual orientation (for more see Nelson 2004).

Structural Violence

Structural violence, as defined by Johan Galtung (1993, 106) is “avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or ... the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible”. Such impairment is considered to be violence because it causes direct injury or death to human beings and structural because its mechanisms are within the political and economic constructions of a social world (Farmer *et al.* 2006). This is also often referred to as invisible violence because its effects are often

seen at the margins of society. Those not in the lower classes legitimise it as part of the overall functioning of the social order and of society in general. Although structural violence has been studied by cultural anthropologists concerned with racism, classism, poverty, health, colonialism, sexism, etc., (for example Bourgois 2010; Farmer 2004; Scheper-Hughes 1992) its usage is still rare in archaeology. Klaus (2012) combined this approach with Walker's (2001, 575) definition of violence as "all injuries resulting from the marginalization of one group by another through territorial expansion, social dominance, or economic exploitation meet the definition of violence if the dominant group shows callous disregard for the safety and physical well-being of the people they have marginalized".

This approach of looking for structural violence in the form of health inequalities, as well as other traumas that affect the human skeleton, will be utilised in this chapter to see if structural violence affected individuals by gender or social class or both.

Methods for assessing structural violence through health inequalities

Skeletons from different social classes were studied for health inequalities. Numerous studies of living individuals have shown that individuals who are sickly and/or malnourished in childhood suffer worse adult health and often die at younger ages than those who had better childhood health. The health measures documented in this study include:

1. Linear enamel hypoplasia (LEH) (lines on teeth) that result from disease, malnutrition, or any condition that is severe enough to stop growth of the body while resources are redirected towards keeping the child alive. If the child recovers, these bands on teeth leave a permanent record of that sickness/growth disruption (Goodman and Rose 1991).
2. *Cribrra orbitalia* (pores in the upper eye sockets) that result from anaemia in the body. This usually occurs in early childhood and can recur throughout life if the anaemia persists or recurs (Walker *et al.* 2009).
3. Adult stature (height) as measured from the length of the adult femur. Human height is one of the most sensitive indicators of health and is often associated with economic status, environment, and nutrition of the individual (Bogin and Keep 1999).
4. Dental caries (cavities) which form from bacteria colonising the surface or roots of teeth. Caries are a measure of carbohydrates in the diet (Hillson 2008). High caries rates are often seen in the teeth of people who had high amounts of maize in their diets.

5. Ante-mortem trauma was also tabulated. Individuals with high rates of trauma during life and poor health from structural violence were likely to not be able to heal from their wounds and were more likely to die at a younger age than healthier individuals.

The Moche society

Details of Moche society can be found in many resources (Bawden 1999; Demarest and Conrad 1992; Isbell and Silverman 2002; Silverman and Isbell 2002; Silverman 2004; Wirth, Rosaldo and Collier 1982). The Moche people lived in a federation of semi-independent valley polities from approximately 100–800 AD, united by religious rule and warfare designed to capture people (mostly other Moche) for use in sacrifice to appease their deities during times of environmental crisis. Each valley had its own temples and ruling class, but all served under the elite ruling class of the Capital city. The area occupied by the Moche is shown in [Fig. 12.1](#).

The Moche were advanced artisans and craftspeople and they left behind a wide range of stunning artifacts including ceramics, metal works, gold works, textiles and pyramid structures. Elaborate works of art that depicted their lives and beliefs were painted onto these objects, much showing violence such as human sacrifice, ritual combat and body mutilation. Direct evidence from the study of human skeletons and mummies can provide a record of life events that can confirm whether these types of scenes were mere fantasy or a grim reality. For example, the discovery of over 150 sacrificed and mutilated skeletons, as well as the tombs of the powerful religious elites who carried out sacrifice rituals, provided an abundance of evidence that whatever violence could be imagined was carried out with disturbing regularity (Verano 1997a, 1997b, 2000).



Figure 12.1. Map of Moche and Sicán territories.

The elites in Moche society were religious and military leaders who ruled from a centralised location and were set apart from other classes by their fine clothing, jewellery made of gold and gold alloy and high headdresses. Images on ceramics show their power: they are depicted in the finest clothing and jewellery and they are shown being carried in litters and meting out punishments, including mutilation and death.

In Moche society, women were seen in positions of power. Researchers have excavated the remains of eight Moche Priestesses (Castillo 2005) and one tattooed Warrior Queen (Lady of Cao) (Jordán 2006). High-status elite women appear in Moche iconography and appear to play an important part in rituals of human sacrifice, funerals, and other important religious and state functions (Gagnon

2006). However, women in general did not appear to be highly favoured as skeletal studies show that female commoners were much more likely to be malnourished and stressed than commoner males.

Members of Moche society participated in an intricate system of violence and ritual control to better their own social positions. Higher status individuals could command more production and labour which would result in more varied diets and more access to healers, with the benefit of better health. Commoners working to support religious elites did not have the same degree of access to resources unless they were allocated to them by the elites. For example, male workers who laboured on building and maintaining irrigation canals had a diet high in seafood which afforded them better health than those who did not.

Moche warfare and Sacrifice

There are at least five examples of Moche elites conducting mass killings of male prisoners during times of ecological change. These would take place on plazas associated with large ceremonial mounds or *huacas*. Some had their throats cut and others were stabbed to death. A spectacular find was made at Dos Cabezas in the Jequetepeque Valley of a male skeleton holding a *tumi* knife in his left hand and a tiny ceramic head in his right. He was interred with a cache of severed human skulls with cervical vertebrae still attached (Cordy-Collins 2001a). The Moche also occasionally sacrificed women (failed healers) and young children but preferred captured male prisoners.

Violence was structurally integrated within state-level religion and political control. Legitimising the power and authority of the ruling class was done through manipulating the whims of the gods, by way of sacrifice. Iconography shows warriors engaged in one-on-one combat with Moche from other valleys, followed by the capture of the losers as prisoners to be used in sacrificial rituals. Although their skeletons show extensive damage from wounds and trauma during life, their developmental health was good. Verano (2000) notes that childhood anemia and growth disruption (as measured by teeth) were rare. It is likely that they were identified as promising warriors (and future sacrifices) early on, which resulted in their acquired status. The images show the prisoners to be sacrificed are not guarded and are only lightly secured, suggesting that there was an honor in accepting their fate (Topic and Topic 2009).

Context	Sample size	LEH (lines/ tooth)	% cribra orbitalia (anaemia)	% carious teeth	% ante-mortem trauma	Mean stature (height) cm
Moche Sipan elite males	4	0	0	3	0	161
Moche Sipan elite females	4	0	0	18	0	157
Moche Pacatnamu commoner males	69	n/a	2 for M/F combined	12	3 for M/F combined	158
Moche Pacatnamu commoner females	58	n/a	2 for M/F combined	23	3 for M/F combined	147
Moche Pyramid of the Moon commoner male sacrifices	65	rare	rare	n/a	extremely common	n/a

Moche structural violence

The health and ante-mortem trauma data for Moche support a model of structural violence which mainly affected female commoners (Tab. 12.1). The intersectionality between gender and social class is demonstrated by the huge stature gap between commoner males and females. Female commoners are 11 cm shorter than their male counterparts at the centre of Pacatnamu. They also have a lot more dental caries, which suggests a dietary imbalance consisting of lots of carbohydrates (probably maize) in the diet and shortages of protein, iron, and other essential nutrients for child growth. Human height is strongly affected by malnutrition and disease during the developmental years. Low-status female children were stunted and never caught up. Stunting can also affect the development of critical organs in the body and lead to various types of impairment and even earlier death than those who were not affected.

This type of inequality resulting in a permanent reduction of length and quality of life for low-status females is a type of structural violence. While it is not known whether depriving female children was intentional, the results indicate that males were favoured from an early age and rewarded for the masculinity that brought them closer to the gods to whom they could eventually be sacrificed. Male sacrifices from the Pyramid of the Moon at the Moche Capital show extremely good health (LEH and anaemia are both rare), though there was a lot of healed and healing trauma, mainly fractures from combat (Verano 2000). Females did not have the same hope of social mobility. They could be born into high-status positions, but the life course of most females was to raise children, maintain the household, and produce food and goods for the family and state. This study also supports the thesis that gender inequality was more significant than social inequality in the formation and maintenance of the Moche State (Gagnon 2006, 277). It should be noted that these results come from

valleys that appear to have been ruled primarily by men.

Did the presence of female Moche rulers in other valleys have any impact on the common women in those valleys? Studies on the health of the elite Moche priestesses and their subjects are needed. Since several of these individuals were only discovered within the last two years, there should be much more forthcoming on the Lady of Cao (Jordán 2006) and the Priestesses of San José de Moro (Castillo 2005).

The Sicán society

Since 1978, the Sicán Archaeological Project directed by Izumi Shimada has detailed many aspects of Sicán religious, social, and political organisation. The Middle Sicán Period (approximately AD 800–1100), when the Sicán were the most powerful, represented a time when their dominance extended from the Chira Valley in the north to the Chicama Valley in the south, a 350 km stretch of the most agriculturally productive part of the entire Peruvian coast.

The central Sicán capital was the seat of power of the Sicán state. Power was demonstrated through the construction of ten large *huacas* (pyramids), elegant temples for worship, and lavish tombs used to immortalise important people. This may have been a pilgrimage centre for people coming from all over the Andes to witness and take part in religious ceremonies.

The *huacas* were surrounded by craft workshops, storage facilities, and residences. Workers there produced intricate gold crafted items for use by the elites, along with arsenical copper, silver, and gold alloys, such as tumbaga, on a large scale. Extensive commoner settlements surrounded the Capital.

The Sicán represented a pre-Hispanic state-level society with marked social classes, as evidenced by architectural variation, differentiated craft production and distribution (particularly ceramics and metals), and artistic representations (such as an elaborately attired man with a scepter being carried on a litter). In fact, Shimada has argued for a three-tier social hierarchy in the Sicán society based on the differentiated access to different metals noted primarily in graves and secondarily in residences (Shimada *et al.* 2000).

Sicán iconography indicates women did not enjoy the same positions of power as they did during the Moche period. Based on examination of burial locations, grave goods and the physical nature of skeletal remains (more robust bones and muscle connections would be indicative of more demanding types of work performed in life),

women could have been involved in diverse tasks such as building construction, farming, craft production, midwifery, rearing children and possibly religious and burial duties. Women made up the majority of the victims of Sicán human sacrifice.

Sicán warfare-related violence

Three individuals from the Sicán Capital show signs of involvement in warfare (Farnum 2002). A low-level elite male has a healed spear wound to his pelvis (Fig. 12.2), one commoner individual of indeterminate sex has three healed mace wounds to the back of the head (Fig. 12.3) and another commoner male has a bowed humerus in the upper arm consistent with substantial use of that arm for sling stone throwing. Similar bowed humeri have been found in other populations where slings were used (Benfer 1990; Cappaso *et al.* 1999).

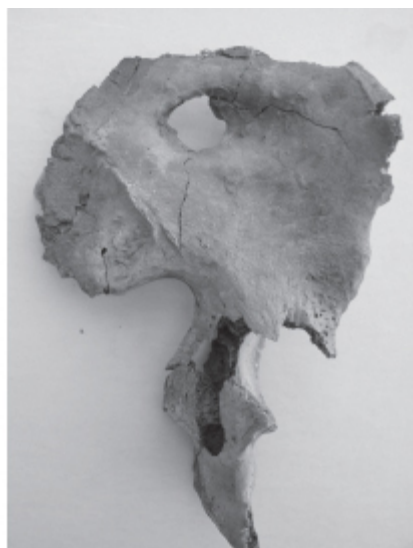


Figure 12.2. Pelvis of Huaca Loro West Tomb principal individual with a partially-healed wound.

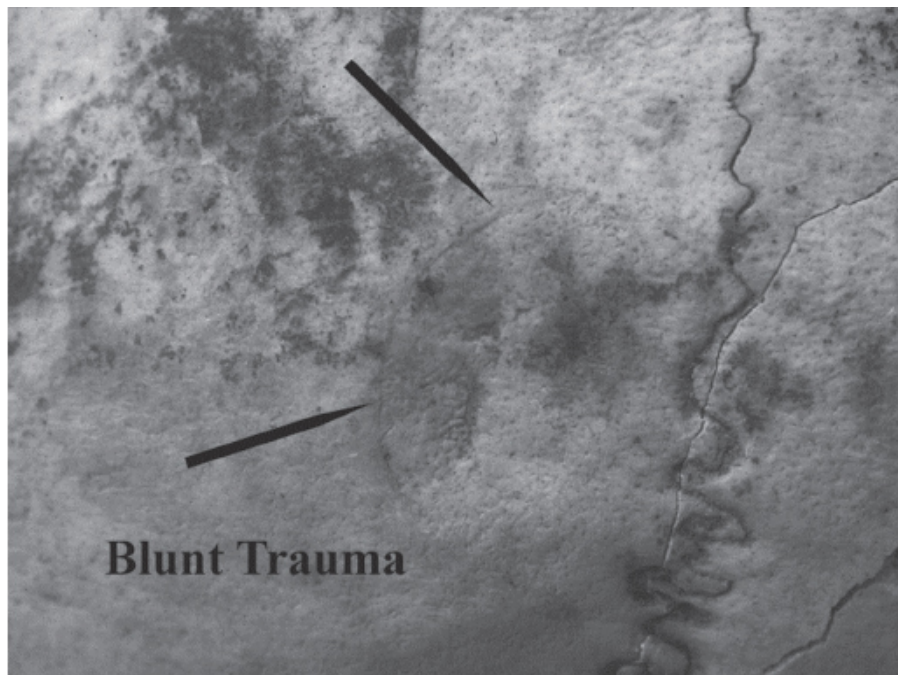


Figure 12.3. Healed cranial blunt trauma.

The nature of the conflicts that these individuals were engaged in is unknown at this point. All of these individuals survived their wounds at least for some time after obtaining them and there is no sign of captive warriors at any of these sites. The Sicán do not appear to be as involved in combat as the Moche, as there is less evidence of prisoners weapons and fortified sites

Sicán sacrifice

The Sicán also practiced human sacrifice as evidenced by murals of the Sicán god or his earthly representative holding a tumi knife in one hand and a severed head in the other (Fig. 12.5). It is probable that some of these were mass killings. Approximately 150 human skeletons were found in boxes full of gravel and sand adjacent to columns atop the burned pyramid at Huaca Rodillona in the Sicán Capital Fig. 12.4). The bones were in very poor condition after centuries of exposure to the elements, but three were recovered for study. All three were female; two were very robust and had substantial arthritis for their age, suggesting hard labour. Two of the three had large amounts of caries, two had anaemia, and one had LEH, suggesting poor childhood health (Farnum 2002). It is not known how they were chosen to become sacrifices or whether all 150 of the column sacrifices were

female, but three out of three suggests it is more likely that female sacrifices were the rule and not the exception.



Figure 12.4. Woman sacrificed on top of Huaca Rodillona.

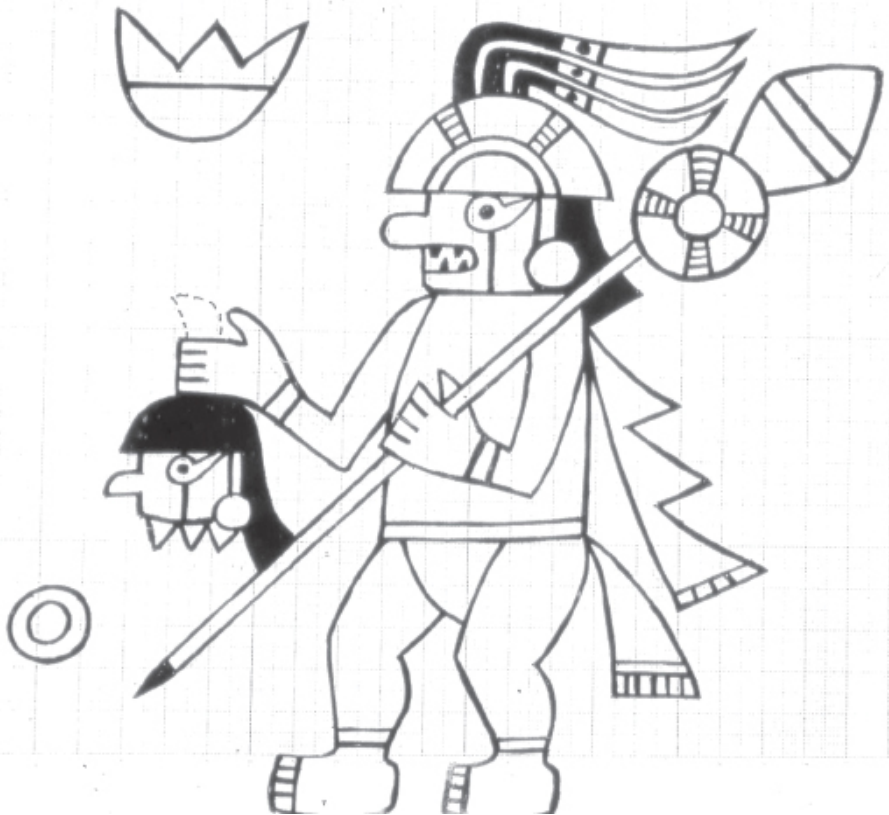


Figure 12.5. Sicán male warrior carrying a severed head.

The remains of male elites found in deep shaft tombs were found buried with individuals who were likely to have been sacrificial victims. Groups of young women (most were 15–22 years of age) and children often accompanied male elites to their ritual afterlife. About one-third of these women had scars of pregnancy, suggesting that their deaths left young children behind with no mother. Six individuals (all commoners) exhibit cut marks to the cervical vertebrae in the throat area. These individuals were likely sacrificed on the top of *huacas* or elsewhere and then stored for use upon the male elite's death before being placed in his tomb (since many were missing bones and skeletons were not fully articulated in the tombs, exhibiting signs of lengthy decay). It is not known whether all the victims dedicated to a particular elite male were sacrificed at once, in preparation for the burial, or at different times of his life.

There were male and female remains found in a trench next to one of the pyramids at the Sicán Capital that were likely to have been sacrificed as dedication to the pyramid as it was built. The females were found to exhibit the wounds associated with throat slashing and

the males were more likely to be stabbed to death (Farnum 2002). Temples built atop pyramids were constructed for ancestor worship and the sacrifices may have been connected to this (Shimada *et al.* 2004).

Sicán structural violence

Gender, social status and health data for Sicán is shown in [Tab. 12.2](#). The results were examined for differences in health status by gender and/or social class. The emerging pattern is one where females suffered more structural violence than males at every social level, measured by declining numbers in at least two out of the five health indicators for every social class. At every class level, females were shorter than males. Low-level elite and female commoners also had greater LEH than their male counterparts. High-level elite and female commoners had more ante-mortem trauma. Finally, at the regional site of El Brujo, females had more LEH, anaemia (*cribra orbitalia*), stature, and ante-mortem trauma than males.

My study indicates that social inequality caused structural violence that was present in increasing amounts in all levels, and that females were more likely to be negatively affected regardless of social class. Sicán commoner males were not as privileged as their Moche equivalents. This fits with a model of state function and sacrifice that moves away from the prominence of male warriors and more towards trade and pilgrimage. It is quite likely that both levels of elites obtained significant power through command over ever-expanding trade networks. A lessened obsession with war and capturing prisoners could be an advantage in opening positive relations with other powers further away. They obtained goods from northern South America (emeralds and amber from Colombia and Spondylus shells (symbol of fertility) from Ecuador) and potentially regions even farther away (Shimada 2000).

Table 12.2. Gender, Health, Trauma Data for Sicán

Context	Sample size	LEH (lines/tooth)	% cribra orbitalia (anaemia)	% carious teeth	% ante-mortem trauma	Mean stature (height) cm
Sicán capital high elite males	1	0	0	0	0	160+
Sicán capital high elite females	1	0	0	0	100	158
Sicán capital low elite males	1	0.6	0	7	100	162
Sicán capital low elite females	1	0.8	0	7	0	161
Sicán capital commoner males	5	0.3	50	14	20	158
Sicán capital commoner females	32	0.9	36	7	24	156
Sicán El Brujo males	19	0.25	33	19	n/a	159
Sicán El Brujo females	14	0.5	64	10	25	157

Another hidden structural health risk would predominately affect metallurgists and commoners who lived and worked at workshops. The metal of choice for common usage was arsenical copper which could produce toxic effects during its production and use. Arsenical copper objects were made in workshops surrounding the Sicán Capital. Both males and females have been recovered from beneath the floor in a Sicán combination metal/pottery workshop suggesting that both could have had toxic exposure to arsenic during life. No study has been conducted to look for arsenic poisoning in those workers, but it would be hard to avoid exposure, especially airborne exposure, while it was being smelted. Arsenic exposure in living people can cause multiple forms of cancer, brain damage, nerve damage, and even death. Commoners were more likely to be exposed to toxic arsenic in their work environment and thus to live with many resulting health problems. This is a major form of invisible structural violence as arsenical copper was needed for objects used in ritual activities. Workers, who are burning off some arsenic during the production of those objects, were highly exposed while, once the object is smelted, the arsenic is less likely to leach out and expose the people using the object (Lechtman 1996).

Violence in the form of intentionally broken teeth

An intriguing and painful dimension of Sicán society has emerged from the study of teeth at the Sicán Capital (Farnum 2002). About one-third of the female commoners at the Sicán Capital and the principal male individual (low-level elite) that they were interred with, have broken and dead-in-the-socket pre-molars (Fig. 12.6). The upper left first premolar appears to be the tooth of choice for marking these individuals – but some others have the tooth broken on the opposite side and one individual has a broken premolar on the top and bottom. The pattern of tooth breakage does not fit with dental disease (which typically affects molars first) and is also usual for intentional cultural modification of teeth. There are numerous reports from various world cultures of front teeth being drilled, inlaid, filed or otherwise modified for visual and status purposes (Barnes 2010).

A possible hypothesis is that these people were marked for some reason. The male was nephew to the ruler and potentially an heir to the throne. If, perhaps, he had committed some act deemed inappropriate, but not enough to warrant death or expulsion, it is possible that the tooth marking was a way to indicate what he had done. If the women who shared the same type of marking were his wives, slaves and/or other relations, it would be clear that they did

not have identities of their own, as they were simply females. The fact that this would have been a very painful and potentially deadly (if the tooth became infected and the infection spread) event in these women's lives it must stand out as an intentional act of violence against women. It is noted that this practice was seen in only one Sicán group and not seen anywhere else in Sicán or Moche.

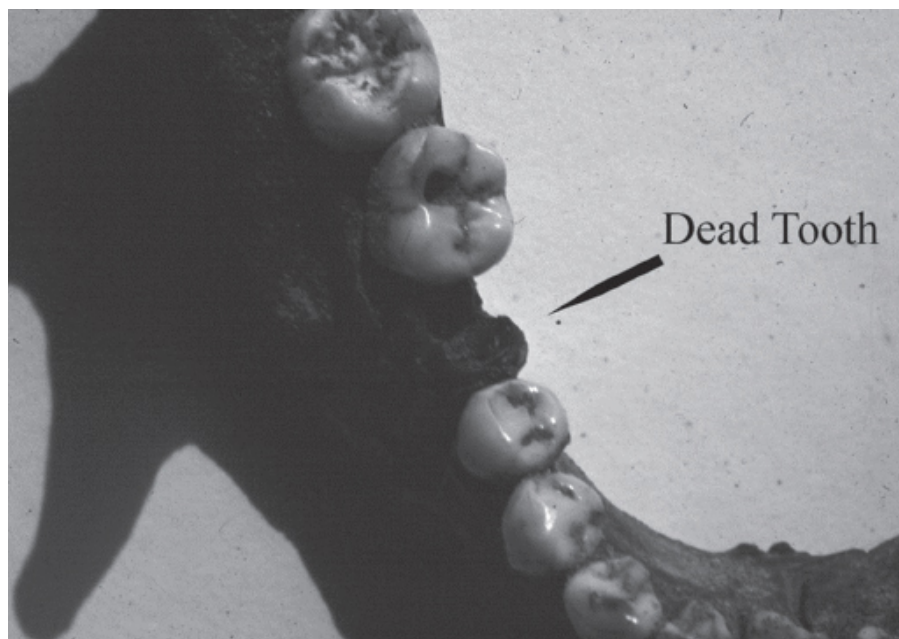


Figure 12.6. Broken and dead-in-the-socket pre-molar of a Sicán individual.

Conclusion

The Moche and Sicán were quite different in many ways, though religion and human sacrifice were important to both and class and gender divisions were strong. Evidence of some female empowerment at the elite level in Moche culture does not correlate to lesser amounts or types of structural violence but there is an apparent large difference in terms of human sacrifice. The Moche mainly sacrificed males and the Sicán mainly sacrificed females. What this meant to them may be differently interpreted though. The Moche sacrificed their best warriors and treated them well in life, much better than lower-level females. The Sicán sacrificed young women and children who were mostly healthy during life. Does this mean they were valued higher? Or did the sacrifice of healthier women simply show more respect to the male elites and gods?

Invisible violence in the form of social inequalities that affected

health occurred in both Moche and Sicán cultures. Males were more privileged at nearly every social level (with the exception of the most elite levels of society). They were healthier, more likely to live longer and to heal better from wounds and illnesses, due to their more stable and healthy childhood growth. Female commoners had the worst health in both societies, showing clearly the intersectionality of gender and social class. Male commoners in Sicán society were not as valued as in Moche society, where they could potentially be celebrated as warriors. Sicán commoners, both male and female, could have been exposed to toxic levels of arsenic while living and working at craft workshops.

Males in both societies were more likely than females to engage in warfare, though we have evidence of at least one female warrior in Moche society. Trauma in women was more likely to be caused by accidents or intense manual labour. Warfare-related injuries occurred more frequently in the Moche society that regularly participated in ritual combat and became rarer in Sicán as this society moved towards being more trade-based than warfare-based.

It is difficult to pinpoint interpersonal violence, such as domestic abuse or violence against slaves and servants. The marking of the low-level elite male and his six female commoners in the form of intentionally broken premolars was unique and appears to reflect a power imbalance where one male is linked to multiple wives or servants.

People often say that there would be fewer wars if women ruled the world. This is unlikely to be true if the underlying power structures are not revised to be equal for all in a society, which wasn't the case with the Moche or the Sicán. Whether our own societies will ever achieve this peace and equality is uncertain. Will we learn from the past or continue along this road?

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Chapter 13

Gender and violence in archaeology: Final commentary

Louise Hitchcock

Introduction

I am grateful to the editors for the opportunity to comment on this book, which elevates violence alongside gender in archaeology as a fundamental organising principle in human society. Although my own research interests revolve around space and how it creates meaningful relationships among different aspects of material culture through establishing context and performativity on different scales from assemblages to monumental architecture to maritime connectivity, my own interaction with gender archaeology began as a student in 1990. I was tasked with writing a seminar paper on Minoan bronze figurines and the organising structure of gender identity simply seemed to be the most logical place to start (Hitchcock 1997). I was unable to move beyond categories of male/female in this first work as the figurines adhered to this simple binary. As the success of this paper led to invitations to write others, I searched out more ambiguous representations in Aegean art in order to undertake post structuralist analyses (Hitchcock 2000) and explore issues related to concepts of “third gender” (Hitchcock 2009). In 2011, I (Hitchcock 2013) wrote a meditation on how the violent upheavals, both natural and cultural, that plagued Aegean civilisations in the 2nd millennium BC, might have emotionally affected the population. Gender did not play a role in this project, but after reading the essays in this volume, I am open to new possibilities in my own research and I have begun citing it heavily.

The purpose of this thought provoking and ground-breaking

volume is to combine the study of the three disciplines of violence, gender, and archaeology. The aims were to move beyond traditional studies of gender in the past by including violence and to re-inscribe gender into the study of violence in archaeological remains. In providing a handbook of case studies, it falls very much within the framework of the foundational 1989 book *Engendering Archaeology* by Margaret Conkey and the late Joan Gero, while bringing the new equation of violence into the mix.

As Driessen (2013, 9–10) writes, violent destruction must have formed a normal part of prehistory in ancient times. Yet, in prehistory, violence and gender is often submerged, sanitised, or absented within the discourse of objective scientific language, such as descriptive analyses of human remains, the delight in finding a destruction level because it means more and better finds, or these topics are limited to discussion of changes in stylistic categories of art that signal the passage of time (González-Ruibal 2013; Hitchcock 2013). For example, when Mediterranean civilisation collapsed, Higgins (1981, 189) wrote that art declined seemingly divorced from the violence and social upheaval that brought an end to the Bronze Age. In contrast, the chapters presented here rely on well-documented remains to reinscribe violence and gender relations into our understanding of the material.

The ten case study chapters mainly focus on Europe of the prehistoric era to the Viking era, but there are also three dealing with the ancient Near East and one dealing with the Moche of Peru, which gives the book a nice geographic and temporal balance. In addition, one thing that is under-represented in many gender volumes is approaches to masculinity/ies, and this collection redresses that imbalance. Also present are discussions of youths and third gender.

Evidence and methodology

A broad range of direct and indirect evidence and methodologies were used in these studies, which take us outside the range of simply using gender studies. These categories include the analysis of human remains, the study of their deposition, emphasis on artefacts that connote violence or trauma, the analysis of iconography, the attempt to reconstruct emotional responses to violence, and the use of critical theory to challenge dominant discourses.

A good number of the chapters underscore the vital importance of biological anthropology, which is becoming mandatory to the study of funerary contexts (Boyd and Dakouri-Hild 2016, 9). Violence leaves

archaeological traces on the body. Thus, bioarchaeological studies of osteological trauma and positioning of the body for burial are the most direct indicators of conflict and violence. These may include fractures that occur around the time of death (perimortem) (Martin *et al.* 2010). Non-lethal trauma to the skull and healed fractures may indicate abduction or beatings. Ossified ligaments, osteoarthritis, asymmetries, and dental pathology provide evidence of servitude, while amputations may suggest punishment, and lack of a proper burial indicates outsider or deviant status in a community. In addition, skeletal remains provide information about differential access to proper nutrition, which begins in childhood as discussed by Farnum.

As Tomkins and Schoep (2016, 228) rightly observe, mortuary data were once treated as straightforward reflections of a fixed social personae. This falls subject to critique when burial remains are sexed. Indeed, Whitehouse offers a critique on the statistical problems encountered when working with older materials. Work on gender and/or violence as well as other aspects of working with burial remains, might be further enhanced in future research by using the approach known as *archaeothanatology* (Crevecoeur *et al.* 2015). *Archaeothanatology* is a collaborative approach in which the physical anthropologist oversees the entire archaeological process from excavation to publication whereby contextual relations are carefully documented and various specialists work as a team on the final outcome.

Findings

Although the chapters in this volume are quite diverse in terms of period, culture, methods, and data sets, there are certain aspects that unite some of them and others that set them apart. It is particularly engaging to read differing views on violence and gender linked to oppression, hierarchy, status, age, and deviance. The theme of structural violence defined by Farnum as impairing fundamental human needs or the ability of an individual to meet his or her needs runs strongly through a number of the chapters. Overall, the volume makes it clear that violence becomes another structuring principle in society alongside other structuring principles such as subsistence strategies, kinship ties, identity construction, and adaptive strategies (e.g. Haviland 1999). Violence can also represent a gendered form of success requiring mastery of certain skills related to warfare. Another theme in several of the chapters is the focus on separate spheres of influence among males and females, which may be used to argue both

for and against gender equality.

Burial remains followed by weapons, use wear on weapons, ability to reconstruct associated motor skills as indicated by use wear in skeletons or on weapons, and iconography are some of the main indicators of violence that can be related to gender. Gender inequalities that may also cross-cut social inequalities characterise the findings of several of the chapters (e.g. boys and men, warriors and slaves).

André Spatzier considers disarranged burials as possible “deviant” burials at the Pömmelte-Zackmünde (Germany) enclosure where males were placed in formal burials within the enclosure and females, juveniles, and infants were thrown amongst other objects into deposition shafts. The partial and disarticulated nature of the remains is interpreted as disrespectful discard. There is clearly different treatment with regard to gender, which Spatzier regards as reinforcing the social order through gender specific violence. The evidence for perimortal trauma on several of the skulls as well as the fragmentation helps bolster his argument, which is more nuanced through introducing the consideration of violence into it. At the same time, other possible explanations should be considered. In contrast to the present work, Julian Thomas (1991, esp. 65, 73) regarded the burial of fragmentary human remains in the ditches of causewayed enclosures and in pit burials of the British Neolithic as connoting special privilege that in some cases seemed to be equal to males, females, and children. In addition, he associates these practices with ancestral worship and with feasting activity, in other words, rituals carried out at the enclosure. Fragmentation is also connected to the practice of symbolic or structured deposition and memorialisation known as *enchainment*, the establishment of lasting bonds between people and objects by depositing part of an object and retaining part as a means of memorialising a special event (e.g. Driessen *et al.* 2008, esp. 7–8; Hill 1996). This is not to assert that Thomas is correct and Spatzier is wrong – particularly as he is using different lenses to interpret the data, only to point out that we must examine all possibilities.

Julie Farnum presents a study of the human remains of the Moche and Sicán of Peru, using structural violence theory to investigate health inequalities and feminist theory to investigate whether having more females in power had an effect on the levels of violence experienced by women, as well as their chances of healing and survival. Like Skogstrand (below), Farnum considers the formative period of childhood, but in this case with regard to nutrition.

Although the sacrificial preferences among the Moche were decapitated male prisoners as indicated in iconography and mass graves, Farnum was able to show that among the Moche and the Sicán nutritional health, ante-mortem trauma, and overwork or exposure to toxic work environments support a model of structural violence toward female commoners, although commoner men were also subject to work hazards. As Moche men were favoured for sacrifice and engaged in combat, they were able to maintain better nutritional health and had greater opportunities for upward social mobility. Another feature analysed was the breakage of the upper left premolar in one-third of female commoners and a low-level elite male they were buried with among the Sicán. Possible reasons discussed for this were body-modification or cultural marking for inappropriate behaviour. It's unusual that some sort of rite of transition wasn't considered. For example, knocking out a tooth, cutting, or ingesting a mild poison were typical ways of enacting a symbolic death prior to re-incorporation into the community in rites of passage rituals (Haviland 1999). Although these findings are interesting, it seems unusual that no discussion of the iconography of the decapitator accompanied the analysis, particularly with the ritualistic defleshing and depicted sexual activity that formed part of the Moche sacrificial rites. The "Decapitator" is the name given by archaeologists to a Moche deity that alternately takes the form of a hybrid octopus and Medusa like creature with sharp fangs or is portrayed as half-human and half-jaguar, carrying a sacrificial blade and a head (e.g. Popson 2002). Although the figure is regarded as male, it seems like a study using third gender theory (below) and investigating its role in fertility could add another dimension to the study of violence and gender among the Moche.

Christine Hue Arcé uses several demotic texts from the Graeco-Roman period in Egypt to distinguish violence directed against males and females in the setting of social interactions. They are also compared to Greek texts of roughly the same time period. Some of the texts revolve around violence and economic issues, with two of these dealing with inheritance issues. The violent acts include imprisonment and rape. Other texts promote wife-beating, with a wisdom text indicating that beating a woman for insulting a man is acceptable despite the asymmetrical nature of the offense. This would seem to contradict Arcé's conclusion that women were not subject to a higher or lower rate of violence than men. Ironically, things have not changed much in this regard in contemporary society, where men kill women because they are angry, but women only normally kill men

when their lives are threatened (Ellroy 1997). Military violence is excluded as normal and legitimate. This view of military violence as normal stands in strong contrast to Skogstrand (below) who convincingly argues that military culture is something very much constructed around male identity and affords men with greater status.

The analysis is the first to compare findings in the demotic texts to Greek papyri. I did feel uneasy with the assumption made by Arcé that Egypt was viewed as violent based on the writings of Juvenal or was idyllic based on those of Herodotus. What further contributed to this uneasiness was the easy way Arcé drew on Middle Kingdom accounts of Old Kingdom acts of violence against women. It falls into the scholarly tendency to see Egypt as static, unchanging and totalitarian compared to the classical west as something youthful, free-thinking, and individualistic (e.g. Said 1978; Bernal 1987).

Maryam Dezhamkhooy and Leila Papoli Yazdi successfully discuss how looking at texts and iconography in Sassanid (Persia), worked to construct sexual identities that reified patriarchy as well as class distinctions. For example, texts used religion as an ideology to preserve the social order where sins related to sexual activity and family life were disproportionately weighted against women. In addition, iconographic depictions elevated the status of elite women by portraying them as elegantly dressed in contrast to low ranking women who were portrayed naked.

Both Uroš Matić and Susan Moraw have the benefit of using text to analyse iconography. They both also benefit from being able to use critical theory. Uroš Matić moves beyond past readings of the iconography of Queen Nefertiti smiting enemies that emphasised their uniqueness and artistic rendering. In doing so, he challenges orientalist (e.g. Said 1978) stereotypes of females as cruel and dangerous beauties that run so deeply throughout western culture that they are even perpetuated in contemporary popular culture. While recognising the idealising aspects of the smiting pharaoh motif, Matić goes on to discuss how this iconography is so crystallised in scholarly discourse that little has been made of small details such as the female gender of the enemies Nefertiti is smiting. He uses these violent images along with similar images of Queen Tiye to argue that binary gender roles are maintained, suggesting a similar, though separate sphere of a woman's domain (e.g. papers in Gero and Conkey 1991). This gender division still perpetuates a dominant masculine role in Egyptian society.

In contrast, Ian Armit contends that separate spheres for males (as warrior headhunters promoting fertility) and females (associated with

promoting elite, ritualised drinking activity) in Saluvian (France) society communicated a balance of power with regard to gender roles. The balance is suggested by the greater level of workmanship on female sculptures and by the attempts by Saluvians to collect and display the sculpted heads of both male and female statues following their destruction by the Romans.

Susanne Moraw very successfully combines feminist theorisations of pornography with her reading of Late Antique imagery of biblical and classical myths featuring sexualised older girls/young women and occasionally feminised men being sexually subjugated in a variety of ways: as victims of male and animal violence and as perpetrators. Although Moraw notes pornography is a 19th century term, she details how it was used to distinguish cheap and mass-produced naked imagery consumed by the lower classes from the art consumed by the elite classes. Thus, using images of nudity and sexual subjugation in Late Antique art in the guise of mythological or religious art created a narrative that could be subjected to and objectified by a male gaze. Moraw reveals an underlying codification for these images in their context with nudity communicating helplessness, spears standing in for the phallus, sadomasochism symbolised by bondage that is part of the story and seemingly neutralised by an Eros, which stands as code for erotic desire. In her readings, Moraw explains how Late Antique art could express and reinforce gender specific power structures in what was a patriarchal and stratified society. Here, one is reminded of the way ancient art in general is both contextualised as well as de- and re-contextualised in the form of nude male Greek and Roman statuary that might be read as a dedication in the context of a temple offering, read as soft-core porn in the context of an Emperor's bedroom, then elevated to the status of a fetishised art object in the context of the art museum with its regimes of representation to construct the subjects of modernity (Preziosi 2003; Hamilakis 2014). Thus, the patriarchal gaze as pornography as well as context can also come into play. Although Moraw states that without text, we can't be absolutely sure images were pornographic, her argument is quite convincing.

Bo Jensen's chapter, which uses anthropology and undertakes a critical feminist analysis of Viking myth to interpret iconography in Viking culture to demonstrate that revenge was a gendered concept, was interesting, but only partially successful. By noting that the presence of Scandinavian women in migration settlements abroad is surprising, Jensen is reifying the stereotype that pirates and other maritime entrepreneurs were male. However, we now know that even though their numbers are fewer, women participated in Caribbean

piracy, fought alongside men in the Royal Navy (Hitchcock and Maeir 2016), and women fighting as Vikings and who also received warrior burials have been documented (Price 2014, 59). After a thorough analysis of the iconography Jensen concludes that the violent images portray male on male violence, with the only female victims being minor characters in the mythology. He goes on to observe that the vengeful women of Scandinavian literature such as Brynhild and others cannot be confidently recognised in the iconography depicting acts of violence. Although this is a stretch, Jensen might consider the case of female Caribbean pirates who dressed in male attire when they were engaging in piratical activities and reverted to female attire otherwise (Rediker 2003, 103–126). Thus, it may be possible that women engaging in acts of revenge were not readily recognisable. Later drawing on Marcel Mauss' *The Gift*, Jensen uses contemporary ethnography to suggest that conflict and exchange were complimentary as gifting and feasting can result in feuds when relationships sour or be used to build military alliances. He further argues that gift-exchange and revenge are predicated on debt: the debt that the gift recipient owes to the giver and the harm an avenger owes to his opponent. While the gifting obligation dies with the giver, the revenge obligation can span generations. Although feuding was a typically male activity women might accept roles as mourners and goaders based on their lack of legal agency, standard tropes in Norse sagas. Hence, while not engaging in violent activity, it seems that they could have served as drivers of it. Even if women did participate as Viking warriors as I suggest above, Jensen makes another relevant point that women lacked legal agency in assemblies and that it was mainly men who developed the physical motor skills and psychological toughness to become warriors (also discussed by Skogstrand).

In considering not just the accoutrement of warfare but the role that violence, military training, weaponry and other objects play in creating masculine identity from boyhood to manhood, Lisbeth Skogstrand foregrounds a number of significant issues. Among them are the association that toiletry items such as tweezers and razors come to have with masculine warrior identity through their association with swords and the male beauty that was part of the warrior's identity. Acquiring the motor skills to become a warrior through years of training and exercise is also discussed. This introduces Judith Butler's (1990, 25) notion of performative iterations into the construction of warrior identity. Similar studies on the transfer of weaving technology (Cutler 2016) have raised particular

issues related to ethnicity with regard to how the particular motor skills necessary for weaving might be transferred from knowledgeable adults to apprentice children. In constructing warrior identity Skogstrand, suggests boundaries of exclusion are maintained by denying the same recognition men attain to women with the same ability (how little things have changed as discussed in Bo Jensen's chapter). In addition, the central role violence plays in masculine social discourse elevates its role as both an ideology and as a structuring principle in society, rendering warfare as an ongoing system that in turn influences other structuring principles in society such as, hierarchy, status, division of labour, and rites of transition to adulthood. For example, if you don't embrace the warrior ethos, you are not a real man. In carrying out her study over the *longue durée* (e.g. Hodder 1987) of the Late Bronze Age to the Roman period Skogstrand is able to show how military warrior culture subsumes other structuring principles such as tribal and clan membership. She shows that the materiality of violence does not neatly conform to historical periods (e.g. González-Ruibal 2013). Skogstrand also touches on the feelings and sensations associated with warrior identity, noting that acquiring this identity means being able to minimise these traumas. Gender distinctions of the warrior class might also represent status distinctions, for example, the highly-groomed warrior as contrasted with an un-groomed slave. Other important issues come to play such as how do you weigh the various categories of evidence that make up an assemblage as in the warrior burials, for example tweezers versus razors, swords and spears placed in a grave.

Laura M. Whitehouse also considers warrior identity, interrogating the concept of the "weapon equals warrior" approach and whether the warrior designation can be applied to anyone. She notes that studies of weapon burials in Europe have been used to construct an elite warrior ideology based on gender, power, status, and military prowess. Whitehouse notes that a lot of the weight for this argument rests on poorly preserved skeletal evidence where the only thing needed to define a warrior persona is an assemblage of weaponry. She problematises this assumption by considering third-gender individuals such as the berdache, hijra, and eunuch. Third gender refers to the plurality and fluidity of identity constructions that include transformation, conciliation and abandonment of the absolute contrast of male and female, although normative practices or behaviours may associate such individuals with traditional social categories (Herdt 1996). Whitehouse observed that although "confused" burials may be few, they represent an area of archaeology

that has been overlooked and require us to challenge the nature of burial data. Whitehouse also highlights the importance of motor skills in constructing warrior identity, observing that these are created through repetitive social practices that leave occupational markers as seen in alteration of muscle attachments to the bone. These can be studied along with pathological conditions and evidence of trauma. The strength required to wield a weapon also draws her attention to the deposition of weapons assemblages in child graves. Thus, she was able to demonstrate that the identity of warrior burials could be significantly challenged and reduced by combining the study of trauma, occupational markers, age, and burial assemblages in order to produce more reliable results. Her study also highlights the relevance of *archaeothanatology* approaches as discussed above.

Conclusions and further questions

The chapters in this volume have presented some accounts of what the archaeological footprint of violence as it relates to gender identity might look like. It is hoped that it lays the groundwork for future explorations of these intersecting concepts, which certainly affected large groups of people, as there is a multiplicity of meanings afforded to both violence and gender (Ralph 2012). Structural violence, which was considered explicitly and implicitly in a number of the chapters, is also related to issues of ethics and heritage presentation that can be extended to include gender (González-Ruibal and Moshenska 2015). Another area that might be further explored is the relationship between violent destruction and gender identity. Violent destruction is often met with glee by an archaeological team as it leaves a detailed and meticulous material record with many eye-popping finds that look good in glossy magazines and on grant applications, but must have been traumatic for fleeing families. Destructions may have led to enslavement, death, illness, mass graves, and other kinds of loss and trauma.

Much more future work remains to be done to explore the relationship between emotions, gender, and violence as approaches to emotion in archaeology in the past have been mainly limited to ritual (Harris and Sorenson 2010) and bereavement studies (Tarlow 1999; 2000). This calls for more use of texts when possible, analysis of funerary remains, and more of an emphasis on phenomenological approaches and the agency of objects (e.g. Hodder 2012) as the archaeological study of emotion is located in the conditions through which experience is created (Tarlow 2010, 184). In addition, future

research might analyse violence as a driver for migration and how that contributes to asymmetries in gender identity remains an area that is wide open to further study.

The role of gendered aspects of overwork as an outcome of structural violence is also a broad topic for investigation that was examined here in the construction of warrior identity. Overwork can be detected as in the small crawl spaces of ancient mine shafts as are found at Timna (Israel), suggesting the exploitative use of child labour. Another example is the backbreaking work depicted in Egyptian servant statues. Such repetition along with surveillance in carrying out both work activities and disciplined daily routines has been well documented by Eleanor Casella (2002) using Foucault (1977) to interpret the management of Australian convict women working in the Ross Factory (Australia).

Another area of investigation might be how to theorise violence and gender with regard to ethnic cleansing in the past, something that might be particularly difficult when few human remains are present (Hitchcock 2013). Skogstrand's chapter suggests a gendered aspect to destructions caused by human agency based on the embedded nature of violence in warrior cultures, that has wide-reaching implications for further study. We also need to attend to the language we use. For example, in attempting to put a positive spin on collapse and destruction, the term resilience might be invoked to shift emphasis to the survivors and to succeeding cultures and civilisations. But how did displacement, dispossession, diaspora, and migration affect familial, status, and social relationships with regard to gender and violence? Finding the answers begins with asking the questions and continuing to ask them.

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